

# Human Survival and Consciousness Evolution

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*Edited by* STANISLAV GROF

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# Human Survival and Consciousness Evolution

Edited by Stanislav Grof

with the assistance of Marjorie Livingston Valier

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## Contents

Introduction	vii
<i>Stanislav Grof</i>	
One	
Human Survival: A Psycho-Evolutionary Analysis	1
<i>Roger Walsh</i>	
Two	
Transpersonal Vision	9
<i>Frances Vaughan</i>	
Three	
The Transformed Beserk: Unification of Psychic Opposites	18
<i>Marie-Louise von Franz</i>	
Four	
On Getting to Know One's Inner Enemy: Transformational	36
Perspectives on the Conflict of Good and Evil	
<i>Ralph Metzner</i>	
Five	
Modern Consciousness Research and Human Survival	57
<i>Stanislav Grof</i>	
Six	
Individuality: A Spiritual Task and Societal Hazard	80
<i>John Weir Perry</i>	

Seven	
Thoughts on Mysticism as Frontier of Consciousness Evolution	93
<i>Brother David Steindl-Rast</i>	
Eight	
Jesus, Evolution, and the Future of Humanity	119
<i>John White</i>	
Nine	
The Buddhist Path and Social Responsibility	135
<i>Jack Kornfield</i>	

Ten	
Transition to a New Consciousness	144
<i>Karan Singh</i>	
Eleven	
The Darkness of God: Theology After Hiroshima	151
<i>James Garrison</i>	
Twelve	
The Incomplete Myth: Reflections on the "Star Wars" Dimension of the Arms Race	177
<i>Michael E. Zimmerman</i>	
Thirteen	
Laying Down A Path in Walking: A Biologist's Look at a New Biology and Its Ethics	204
<i>Francisco J. Varela</i>	
Fourteen	
Pacific Shift: The Philosophical and Political Movement from the Atlantic to the Pacific	218
<i>William Irwin Thompson</i>	
Fifteen	
Space-Age and Planetary Awareness: A Personal Experience	239
<i>Russell L. Schweickart</i>	
Sixteen	
Near Death Experiences: Implications for Human Evolution and Planetary Transformation	251



*Kenneth Ring*

Seventeen

The Omega Project 271

*Kenneth Ring and Alise Agar*

Eighteen

Death, The Final Stage of Growth 274

*Elisabeth Kübler-Ross*

Contributors 287

Index 293

## Introduction

Contemporary humanity has the dubious privilege of being in a role that is unique and unprecedented in the history of our planet. We are the first species that has developed the potential to commit collective suicide and to destroy in this catastrophic act all the other species and life on earth. It is a sad irony that this situation has been made possible by rapid advances of science and technology, two forces that Western peoples have long considered to be reliable means of creating a bright and happy future for the world.

In a certain sense, modern science has fulfilled this promise. It has made discoveries that have the potential to solve most of the problems that plague humanity; it can ameliorate diseases,

poverty and hunger, create renewable and inexhaustible supplies of energy, and generate resources that enable an average person to have a living standard that in earlier times was reserved only for a privileged few. Within a few centuries, science has made astonishing breakthroughs and has radically transformed our everyday life. It has been able to release the energies of the atom, build jet airplanes faster than sound and spacecraft that can travel beyond the limits of our solar system, explore the depths of the oceans, transmit sound and color pictures all over the globe and across cosmic space, and decipher the genetic code.

However, all these promising discoveries and inventions have failed to create the desired sorrow-free future. As a matter of fact, the shadow side of the rapid advances of science is becoming more evident every day. The greatest scientific triumphsatomic energy,



electronics, space-age rocketry, cybernetics, laser light, and the miracles of modern chemistry and bacteriology have backfired and turned into a menace of unimaginable proportions.

Surrounded by all the miraculous technology approaching science fiction, humanity seems to be farther away from a happy and sorrow-free existence than ever before. As a matter of fact, the most technologically advanced countries show a rapid increase in emotional disorders, suicidal rate, criminality, and drug abuse. The prospect of a glorious future has been replaced by a set of highly plausible dismal scenarios.

The most drastic and apocalyptic of these doomsday scripts is, of course, radical extermination of life on this planet by an atomic war and the following radioactive winter. While this nightmarish vision of a possible nuclear holocaust permeates our lives as a perpetual

threat, there are other scripts that are already well under way. Although less obvious and dramatic, they are insidiously unfolding in the middle of our daily existence and could in the long run lead to similar consequences.

We can mention here, above all, the industrial pollution that already endangers life and health of the population in many areas of the world. Beside such dramatic manifestations as acid rain, toxic dumps, smog, pollution of water, soil and air, and dying of forests (Waldsterben), there is also the invisible danger of all the pollutants that we ingest every day with our foodpreservatives, dyes, artificial sweeteners, hormones, pesticides, herbicides, and disinfectants. We can add to these threats the unsolved problem of the radioactive waste and the danger of nuclear accidents, so dramatically illustrated by the disasters at Three-Mile Island in the United States and Chernobyl in the U.S.S.R. And there are also several less imminent doomsday scenarios, such as possible

loss of planetary oxygen by reckless deforestation and poisoning of the ocean plankton and other flora, destruction of the ozone layer of the earth, increase of temperature and melting of polar ice, the specter of AIDS, and possible disastrous consequences of genetic engineering.

In view of the dangerous situation in the world, it seems extremely important to understand the roots of the global crisis and to develop effective strategies and remedies to relieve it. Most of the existing approaches focus on factors of historical, political, or economic nature, that are symptoms of this crisis rather than its causes. Similarly, the

measures that are being undertaken reflect this superficial understanding and are nothing but extensions of the strategies that generated this crisis in the first place. As such, they offer very meager hope for a successful resolution.

*Human Survival and Consciousness Evolution* focuses on an aspect of the global crisis that has received in the past much less attention, although it is clearly of paramount significance the role that the human psyche and human nature have played in this unfortunate development. In the last analysis, the problems we are facing are not economical, political, or technological in nature. Considering the available resources and the progress of science, problems of hunger, poverty, and most disease-related deaths in the world are unnecessary. There is also no real need for senseless plundering of non-renewable reserves and polluting of vital resources. There exist



means and technological know-how for feeding the population of the planet, guaranteeing reasonable living standards for all, combatting most diseases, reorienting industries to inexhaustible sources of energy, and preventing pollution.

What stands in the way are factors intrinsic to human nature and personality. Because of them, unimaginable fortunes are wasted in the insanity of the arms race, power struggles, and pursuit of "unlimited growth" and unlimited wealth of select individuals and groups. These forces prevent a more appropriate division of resources among individuals, classes, and nations as well as reorientation of ecological priorities that are vital for continuation of life on this planet. As Mahatma Gandhi so poignantly pointed out, there is no real shortage in the world; there is enough to satisfy everybody's need, but not everybody's greed.

Those who have tried to analyze these

problematic forces in the human nature have often referred to a dangerous schism that seems to exist in modern humanity. It has been described in many different ways as an imbalance between the precipitous intellectual development and emotional maturation of the human race, disproportional evolution of the neocortex in relation to the archaic parts of the brain, interference of instinctual and irrational forces with the rational processes, excessive influence of masculine instrumental thinking and suppression of feminine intuitive sensitivities, and many others.

Some also emphasize the negative role of mechanistic science and of the Newtonian-Cartesian paradigm that have portrayed human

beings as nothing but biological machines and highly developed animals. This position justifies the Darwinian concept of the "survival of the fittest" and endorses self-assertion, ambition, and reckless competition as essentially healthy tendencies reflecting the true nature of human beings. Mechanistic science has in general created a fragmented and biased world-view that is incapable of discovering the absolutely vital need for, as well as potential for, complementarity, synergy, and cooperation.

Modern consciousness research and transpersonal psychology brought a fresh and optimistic perspective into this problem area. According to this view, the factors in human nature that have created the crisis in the world are not fatally connected with the instinctual nature of human beings and with the hardware of the human brain. Human beings are in a difficult

and crucial stage of consciousness evolution and have the potential to reach eventually undreamt of levels of emotional, intellectual, and ethical development. In ancient times, this was dramatically expressed by the Neoplatonist Plotinus, who described mankind as "poised midway between the gods and the beasts." Modern versions of the same idea can be found in the writings of Sri Aurobindo, Teilhard de Chardin, Gopi Krishna, and Ken Wilber.

Transpersonal psychology does more than just throw new light on the problem of the world crisis. It also describes a wide spectrum of techniques by which we can accelerate consciousness evolution in ourselves and others. These range from ancient spiritual practices of the Oriental and Western mystical traditions to Jungian psychology, and clinical or laboratory methods of experimental psychiatry. They make it possible to confront and integrate the shadow aspects of one's personality, to transcend the

identification with the body and the ego, and to connect with the transpersonal domains of one's psyche the Self and the collective unconscious. The experiences of oneness with other people, nature, and the Universe then lead to increased tolerance, capacity to love, development of deep ecological concerns, and a tendency to seek one's wellbeing in harmony with that of others.

*Human Survival and Consciousness Evolution* brings together original contributions of a number of prominent representatives of the transpersonal movement who address the problem of the global crisis from their unique individual perspectives. The psychological presen-

tations include the paper by psychiatrist Roger Walsh who gives a brief analysis of the current world situation and emphasizes its potential as an evolutionary catalyst. Psychologist Frances Vaughan offers a concise description of transpersonal psychology and its goals and discusses how its understanding of the healing process can be applied to the situation in the world.

The world-known Jungian analyst Marie-Louise von Franz uses in her article the historical example of the Swiss saint, Brother Niklaus von Flue, to show that Western civilization has dissociated and disowned the shadow aspect of the archetypal figure of Christ and has been paying great toll for it in the form of detrimental returns of the repressed. However, like Brother Niklaus, modern humanity can confront, transform, and integrate the inner Berserk.

Similarly, consciousness researcher Ralph Metzner emphasizes the integration of the opposites good and evil, male and female, and human-beast as a means of transformation of potentially dangerous aspects of the human psyche. Psychiatrist Stanislav Grof draws in his paper on three decades of his research on nonordinary states of consciousness. Like the previous two authors, he emphasizes that violence in the world has important transbiographical roots. His special interest is in the task of confronting destructive emotions connected with the biological birth process, transcending them and mediating access to the transpersonal domains of the psyche. Jungian analyst John Weir Perry has discovered in his work with individuals experiencing acute psychotic states that many problems of the world reflect a misunderstood and misdirected impulse to become a fully individualized human being (Great Man), an ideal which was first realized historically in the person of ancient sacred kings

in different parts of the world. In modern times, this process of individuation can and has to be internalized in the form of transformative experiences, rather than acted out in a concretized way. While the internalized individuation is conducive to greater social cohesion, harmony, and loving bonds among people, its concretized form is divisive and has destructive consequences for society.

A similar situation exists in relation to religion. True spirituality, found in the mystical branches of the great religions, such as the Christian mystics, the Sufis, and the Kabbalists, is based on deep realization of the unity underlying all humanity and the entire phenomenal world; insights of this nature transcend race, color, culture,



and church affiliation. The misunderstanding of mythology and religious symbolism as historical and geographical references that characterizes most mainstream religions leads to exclusivity and to religious antagonism, chauvinism, and wars.

Brother David Steindl-Rast explores in his paper the nature of mysticism. He points out with extraordinary clarity how a unifying mystical experience can become divisive when it turns into dogmatism, moralism, and ritualism of mainstream religions. The resulting fundamentalist trends then contribute significantly to the crisis in the world. John White then specifically focuses on Christianity, distinguishing its genuine and vital core and original meaning from later distortions and accretions. Psychologist and meditation teacher Jack Kornfield shows how correctly understood

spirituality does not lead to selfish withdrawal from the world and indifference to its problems, but to compassion and social responsibility. Karan Singh combines his profound knowledge of Indian scriptures and his expertise as a modern politician to outline his vision of a comprehensive program that could help to meet the challenges of the global crisis.

Another group of papers in the book focuses on the interface between modern technology, spirituality, and depth psychology. Jim Garrison, using a Jungian approach, explores the archetypal images underlying the problems of the nuclear age and discusses the impact of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on the consciousness and ethics of modern humanity. Michael Zimmerman uses a depth-psychological approach in his analysis of another major issue of our times, the expensive and dangerous "Star Wars" Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). Biologist Francisco Varela brings to the problem of the world crisis

interesting insights drawn from his work in information and system theory and artificial intelligence. In his brilliant analysis of the trends of conceptual evolution in Western society, William Irwin Thompson outlines his idea of the "science of compassion," synthesizing most advanced scientific thinking and the best of the ancient spiritual traditions of the East into a holistic planetary vision. Apollo astronaut Russell Schweickart illustrates in his account of the mystical experience he had while observing the Earth from an orbiting spaceship the impact that space technology might have on humanity's development toward planetary consciousness.

Two papers in the book bring in insights from the ultimate teacher, death. Thanatologist Kenneth Ring explores the global implications

of his study of near-death experiences. He believes that their transformative potential is an important indication that humanity is heading to a higher evolutionary stage described by Teilhard de Chardin as Omega Point. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, world famous pioneer in research of death and dying then closes the volume with her reflections on death as the final stage of growth.

The ideas expressed in *Human Survival and Consciousness Evolution* are exciting and bring new hope into the serious and grim situation we are all facing. Whatever questions one might have about the feasibility of inner transformation of humanity and consciousness evolution as a world-changing force, it might well be our only real hope for the future.

STANISLAV GROF

## Chapter One

### Human Survival:

### A Psycho-Evolutionary Analysis

*Roger Walsh, M.D., Ph.D.*

The great experiment in consciousness, human evolution, now stands at a precipice of its own making. That same consciousness which struggled for millions of years to ensure human survival is now on the verge of depleting its planet's resources, rendering its environment uninhabitable, and fashioning the instruments of its own self-annihilation. Can this consciousness (we) develop the wisdom *not* to do these things? Can we foster sufficient self-understanding to reduce our destructiveness, and mature rapidly enough to carry us through this evolutionary crisis? These are surely the most crucial

questions of our time, or of any time. Today we face a global threat of malnutrition, overpopulation, lack of resources, pollution, a disturbed ecology, and nuclear weapons. At the present time, from fifteen to twenty million of us die each year of malnutrition and related causes; another six hundred million are chronically hungry, and billions live in poverty without adequate shelter, education, or medical care (Brandt, 1980; Presidential Commission on World Hunger, 1979). The situation is exacerbated by an exploding population that adds another billion people every thirteen years, depletes natural resources at an ever-accelerating rate, affects "virtually every aspect of the earth's ecosystem (including) perhaps the most serious environmental development . . . an accelerating deterioration and loss of the resources essential for agriculture" (Council on Environmental Quality, 1979, p. 32). Desertification, pollution, acid rain, and greenhouse warming are among the more obvious effects.



Overshadowing all this hangs the nuclear threat, the equivalent of some twenty billion tons of TNT (enough to fill a freight train four million miles long), controlled by hair-trigger warning systems, and creating highly radioactive wastes for which no permanent storage sites exist, consuming over \$660 billion each year in military expenditure, and threatening global suicide (Schell, 1982; Sivard, 1983; Walsh, 1984). By way of comparison, the total amount of TNT dropped in World War II was only three million tons (less than a single large nuclear warhead). The Presidential Commission on World Hunger (1979) estimated that \$6 billion per year, or some four days worth of military expenditures, could eradicate world starvation. While not denying the role of political, economic, and military forces in our society, the crucial fact about these global crises is that all of them have psychological origins. Our own



behavior has created these threats, and, thus, psychological approaches may be essential to understanding and reversing them. And to the extent that these threats are determined by psychological forces within us and between us, they are actually symptomssymptoms of our individual and collective state of mind. These global symptoms reflect and express the faulty beliefs and perceptions, fears and fantasies, defenses and denials, that shape and misshape our individual and collective behavior. The state of the world reflects our state of mind; our collective crises mirror our collective consciousness.

Attempts to deal with global crises solely by traditional economic, political, or military means will certainly have limited success. If efforts to deal with nuclear weapons, for example, focus solely on establishing equal stockpiles, the underlying psychological forces that fuel the arms race will go untouched. To cure, or at least

produce significant long-term improvement, demands more than symptomatic treatment. It demands not just food for the starving and reduction of nuclear stockpiles, but also psychological understanding and personal sacrifice. Developing understanding may be one of the most urgent tasks facing our generation and may determine the fate of all future generations.

We have clearly created a world situation that demands unprecedented psychological and social maturation if we are to survive. Until now, we have been able to cover or compensate for our psychological shortcomings. We have been able to consume without fear of depletion, discard wastes without fear of pollution, bear

children without fear of overpopulation, and fight without fear of extinction. We have been able to act out our psychological immaturities rather than having to understand and outgrow them, to indulge our addictions rather than resolve them, and to revolve through the same neurotic patterns rather than evolve out of them. But if the world is a stage, it is now no longer big enough for us to continue playing out our psychological immaturities. It is time for us to grow up, and we ourselves have created the situation which may force us to do so.

This growing up that is now demanded of us, this psychological maturation, this development of consciousness, is a form of evolution. For evolution is of both bodies and minds, of matter and consciousness (Wilber, 1981). "Evolution is an ascent towards consciousness," wrote Teilhard de Chardin, and this view has been

echoed by Eastern thinkers such as Aurobindo (1963, p. 27), who said that "evolution of consciousness is the central motive of terrestrial existence" and that our next evolutionary step would be "a change of consciousness." This means conscious evolution a conscious choosing of our future, driven by necessity but steered by choice (McWaters, 1981). Aurobindo said, "Man occupies the crest of the evolutionary wave. With him occurs the passage from an unconscious to a conscious evolution" (Elgin, 1980). This is not only evolution but it is the evolution of evolution.

Because this psychological maturation is demanded of us, our global crises may function as an evolutionary catalyst. And from this perspective, these current crises can be seen not as an unmitigated disaster but as a challenge, a push to new evolutionary heights. They can be seen as a call to each and every one of us, both individually and collectively, to become and

contribute as much as we can. This perspective gives us both a vision of the future and a motive for working toward it.

Is this image idealistic? Yes, indeed it is! But this is by no means bad. Our situation seems to demand nothing less, and idealistic images can be very helpful if used skillfully. Unfortunately, our usual use of ideals is far from skillful. We tend to regard them as hopelessly unattainable, and we either scoff or give up in despair; or we use them as excuses for punishing ourselves when we fail to attain them. Either approach only ensures more pain and failure.

A skillful way to use ideals is to see them not just as goals that must be reached, but as guiding images or visions that provide signposts and directions for our lives and decisions. Such images attract us to actualize them and ourselves. This is the way we must view the evolutionary image; we must not automatically dismiss it as hopelessly idealistic. Rather, we need to see the possibilities it offers for guidance and direction, for escaping our current quandary, and for realizing our human potential. Humanistic, transpersonal, Jungian, Eastern, and some existential psychologists agree that the challenge of individual maturation and evolutionary advance must be a major human motive. "The basic actualizing tendency is the only motive which is postulated in this system," said the great humanistic psychologist Carl Rogers (1959).

To fulfill this demand may be deeply rewarding. Failing to fulfill it may result not only in a lack of growth, but in a particular kind of psychological suffering, a kind which often goes unrecognized. For when these actualizing needs go ungratified, their effects are subtle, existential, and therefore less easily identified. "In general, they have been discussed through the centuries by religionists, historians, and philosophers under the rubric of spiritual or religious shortcomings, rather than by physicians, scientists, or psychologists: (Maslow, 1971). Maslow called them "metapathologies" and described examples such as alienation, meaninglessness, and cynicism, as well as various existential, philosophical, and religious crises. These are the very symptoms that have increasingly plagued Western societies in recent decades (Yalom, 1980) and that contribute to the growing sense of social unrest. The very immaturities and failures of psychological growth from which our global crises stem are

surely central to the prevailing psychological malaise of our time.

A perspective that views these global crises as a potential evolutionary catalyst may help in several ways. Research shows that when people face a life-threatening crisis they feel a desperate need to restore self-esteem by attempting to regain mastery of the situation and by finding some sense of meaning in it (Taylor, 1983).

An evolutionary view meets these needs well. It provides a sense of meaning on a grand scale a scale that encompasses the totality of contemporary threats, includes individuals and the entire species, and transcends all traditional, national, and political boundaries. It enhances self-esteem by seeing our current situation, not as final



proof of human inadequacy and futility, but rather as a self-created challenge to speed us on our evolutionary journey. It motivates us to regain mastery of the situation and demands that we fulfill our individual and collective potential far more than at any time in history. It also provides an antidote to the metapathologies of purposelessness and alienation that have been growing in developed countries during recent decades.

By their own theories of human nature, psychologists have the power of elevating or degrading that same nature. Debasing assumptions debase human beings; generous assumptions exalt them. (Allport, 1964)

The evolutionary perspective provides a meaningful and inspiring view of our contemporary predicament and exalts human nature at the same time.

This perspective has dominated human thought

and action during other periods of great transformation. Analyses of the few truly major transformations of human self-image throughout history suggest that they all combined a broad synthesis of knowledge with an evolutionary view of human kind (Mumford, 1956). Great thinkers such as Plato and Thomas Aquinas, who sparked transformations, said that the first order of business for humanity is to align ourselves with this evolution. But where will this evolution take us? What is our destiny in the universe? To answer this is to go beyond objective facts and to state our personal philosophy, our faith, and our world-view.

The two extreme world-views are probably represented by materialism and *the perennial philosophy*, the central core of understanding common to the great religions. The materialistic perspective suggests that life and consciousness are accidental by-products of matter, and that their evolution is driven by the interplay of

random events and the instinct for survival. The purpose of human life and evolution is solely what humanity decides it is.

The perennial philosophy, which lies at the heart of the great religions and is increasingly said to represent their deepest thinking (Huxley, 1944), suggests that consciousness is central and its development is the primary goal of existence. This development will culminate in the condition variously known in different traditions as enlightenment, liberation, salvation, *moksha*, or *satori*.

The descriptions of this condition show remarkable similarities across cultures and centuries (Walsh & Vaughan, 1980). Its essence is the recognition that the distortions of our usual state of mind are such that we have been suffering from a case of mistaken identity. Our true nature is something much greater, an aspect of a universal consciousness, Self, Being, Mind, or God. The awakening to this true nature, claimed a Zen master, is "the direct awareness that you are more than this puny body or limited mind. Stated negatively, it is the realization that the universe is not external to you. Positively, it is experiencing the universe as yourself" (Kapleau, 1965). A different description can be found in almost any culture. Typical is the claim by an Englishman that to realize our true identity is to "find that the I, one's real, most intimate self, pervades the universe and all other beings. That the mountains, and the sea, and the stars are

a part of one's body, and that one's soul is in touch with the souls of all creatures" (Harman, 1979). Nor are such descriptions the exclusive province of mystics. They have been echoed by philosophers, psychologists, and physicists (Wilber, 1984). "Out of my experience . . . one final conclusion dogmatically emerges," said the great American philosopher William James (1960). "There is a continuum of cosmic consciousness against which our individuality builds but accidental forces, and into which our several minds plunge as into a mother sea."

From this perspective, evolution is a vast journey of growing self-awareness and a return to our true identity (Wilber, 1981). Our current crises are seen as expressions of the mistaken desires, fears, and perceptions that arise from our mistaken identity. But they can also be seen as self-created challenges that may speed us on our evolutionary journey toward ultimate self-recognition.

Which world-view is correct? Are we solely survival-driven animals or are we also awakening gods? How can we decide? Both world-views give answers which are similar and different: similar in that they both tell us to research and explore, different in the emphasis of our exploration. The world-view of materialism says to explore the physical universe and thereby ourselves; the perennial philosophy says to explore our own minds and consciousness and thereby the universe.

In practical terms, it is crucial that we do both. Our survival and our evolution require that we deepen our understanding of both the

universe within and the universe without (Walsh, 1984). We are challenged to choose and create our destiny. That challenge demands that we relinquish our former limits and be and become and contribute all that we can. It calls on us to play our full part in the unfolding human drama that we ourselves have created and asks that we choose, both individually and collectively, something entirely new: conscious evolution.

In conclusion, hard material necessity and human evolutionary possibility now seem to converge to create a situation where, in the long run, we will be obliged to do no less than realize our greatest possibilities. We are engaged in a race between self-discovery and self-destruction. The forces that may converge to destroy us are the same forces that may foster societal and self-discovery. (Elgin, 1980).

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## Chapter Two

### Transpersonal Vision

*Frances Vaughan, Ph.D.*

#### The Transpersonal Perspective

Transpersonal psychology was born from the shared vision of a group of psychologists who saw that the predominant psychological theories of the time were too narrow to do justice to the full spectrum of human potentiality. The *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, now in its sixteenth year of publication, was originally established to publish theoretical and applied research, original contributions, and empirical papers that expanded the field to include psychological inquiry into self-actualization, values, states of consciousness, transcendental

phenomena and concepts related to these experiences and activities. Gordon Allport (1964) wrote:

By their own theories of human nature, psychologists have the power of elevating or degrading that same nature. Debasing assumptions debase human beings; generous assumptions exalt them.

The work of pioneers in the field of consciousness research such as Charles Tart (1969, 1975a, 1975b), Stanislav Grof (1975), Elmer and Alyce Green (1977), and Ken Wilber (1977), contributed to legitimizing this field in the 1970s. In recent years, interest in the psychological investigation of states of consciousness and experiences of transcendence, previously the province of philosophy and religion, has been growing. Definitions of mental health have gradually expanded to include optimal states of consciousness. Thus a more encompassing view of human nature and psychological development has evolved, and consciousness has become a central focus for



psychologists concerned with health and well-being (Walsh & Shapiro, 1983).

Since optimum psychological health is inextricably interwoven with other aspects of well-being, from a transpersonal perspective wholeness depends on a balanced integration of physical, emotional, mental, existential, and spiritual levels of consciousness (Vaughan, 1986). Health is not a static condition that is achieved once and for all, but a dynamic ongoing process of optimum functioning and relational exchange at all levels.

"Transpersonal" means, literally, beyond the personal. As the study of human development beyond the ego (Walsh & Vaughan, 1980), transpersonal psychology affirms the possibility of wholeness and self-transcendence.

Transcendence is explored as manifested in and through personal experience. A transpersonal



view of human relationships recognizes that we exist embedded in a web of mutually conditioned relationships with each other and with the natural environment. Any attempt to improve the human condition must therefore take global, social, and environmental issues into account.

In the past, attention to inner development and consciousness was considered a luxury for a few individuals who could afford to seek personal liberation or who chose to renounce the world. Today, however, we are acutely aware that no one can escape our collective destiny, and humanity as a whole must acknowledge its responsibility for the welfare of the planet. Since all major threats to human survival are now human-caused, attention to psychological and spiritual development has become a social necessity (Walsh, 1984). As human beings, we have the power to destroy the world, but will we find the wisdom to preserve it? The great religious and spiritual traditions all teach that the

source of wisdom lies within us, and it is human consciousness that holds the key to the fate of the earth. Carl Jung (1969) was one of the first to call attention to the centrality of consciousness in human development. He wrote that

in the history of the collective as in the history of the individual, everything depends on the development of consciousness. This gradually brings liberation from imprisonment in "agnia," "unconsciousness," and therefore is a bringer of light as well as of healing.

We can no longer afford to ignore the necessity for both inner work and outer work. Both are necessary if we are to make wise and informed decisions affecting the quality of our lives. The interdependence of the healthy person and the healthy society becomes apparent in exploring the common ground of biological, psychological, and spiritual experience underlying cultural diversity. We are shaped by our environment, but we are also the shapers of that environment.

Appreciating the diversity of approaches to healing and personal growth that are available today can contribute to a better understanding of different values among different cultures and different levels of consciousness within each culture. Understanding the common purpose underlying different approaches to spiritual practice can also deepen our appreciation of the universality of transpersonal experience.

Recognizing the unity as well as the diversity of human experience can also help us find the path best suited to our particular needs.

## Perception, Knowledge and Wisdom

Perception that focuses on particular objects of consciousness and splits the world into subject and object can be distinguished from vision that sees the context in which objects exist as well as the relationships between them. Transpersonal vision allows simultaneous awareness of unity, diversity, and interconnecting relationships.

Thus, a primary function pertaining to the transpersonal domain has been called vision/logic (Wilber, 1980), emphasizing the complementarity of intuitive vision and reason. Knowledge of the transpersonal domain depends on the integration of empirical, rational, and contemplative perceptions of reality, not on the substitution of one for another.

Perceived solely with the eye of reason,

transpersonal vision may appear to be ephemeral or illusory. Perceived intuitively, however, it may appear to be more real or fundamental than rational conceptual constructs that attempt to explain whatever lies beyond the boundaries of current understanding. Huston Smith (1982) states that

to those who, their hearts having been opened, can see with *its* eye (the Sufi's "*eye of the heart*," Plato's "eye of the soul"), spiritual objects will be discernible and a theistic metaphysics

will emerge. The final "night vision" which can detect the awe-filled holiness of everything is reserved for those whom . . . I have called mystics. . . .

The divisions between the levels of reality are like one-way mirrors. Looking up, we see only reflections of the level we are on; looking down, the mirrors become plate glass and cease to exist. On the highest plane even the glass is removed, and immanence reigns . . . looking up from the planes that are lower, God is radically transcendent . . . looking down, from the heights that human vision can to varying degrees attain, God is absolutely immanent.

The clarity of this inner vision depends on self-awareness and intuitive insight. Concepts can either help or hinder the process of awakening this level of consciousness that dissolves boundaries and offers transcendent insight. Depending on how they are used, concepts can be either stepping stones or obstacles to vision. They serve a purpose in communication, but vision transcends rational understanding. Great spiritual teachers are individuals of great vision

who can use concepts to communicate their insight and wisdom to others.

When inner vision is ignored or obscured, one may be caught by illusions that constrict awareness of reality. Inner vision is a gift that requires only attention for recognition. The light that is necessary for vision is ever-present, but anything one fears to see becomes an impediment to clear vision.

Enlightenment, as a goal of the spiritual path, is partly a result of awakening vision. Discussing the question. *What is Enlightenment?*, John White (1985) writes as follows:

Enlightenment is understanding the perfect poise of being-amid-becoming.

The truth of all existence and all experience, then, is none other than the seamless here-and-now, the already present, the prior nature of that which seeks and strives and asks: Being. *The spiritual journey is the process of discovering and living that truth.* It amounts to the eye seeing itself for rather, the I seeing its Self. In philosophical terms, enlightenment is comprehending the unity of all

dualities, the harmonious *composite* of all *opposites*, the oneness of endless multiplicity and diversity. In psychological terms, it is transcendence of all sense of limitation and otherness. In humanistic terms, it is



understanding that the journey is the teaching, that the path and the destination are ultimately one.

Knowledge of the past, like knowledge of the future, depends on selective perception that is subject to change with any shift in perspective. Past and future do not now exist anywhere except in the mind; all of the past and all of the future are included in the full awareness of the present. Any spiritual path can serve as a means of awakening consciousness when truth is the goal.

Traditionally the spiritual path leads through dreams and illusions to knowledge, liberation, and enlightenment, and the awakened mind comes to know itself in wholeness. The goal may be apprehended as unity consciousness, or the truth of existence as intuited by clear vision, free from the constricting distortions of partial perceptions. Vision can give a sense of direction

to the journey, intuiting the completion before it is attained.

Wisdom, in contrast to knowledge gathered by empirical or rational investigation, is an attribute of one who, by virtue of inner vision, understands the nature of illusion and duality. Wisdom becomes available when we see things as they are. Our task is to remove the obstacles to awareness that limit and distort perception.

Vision can be a resource of inexhaustible abundance and unlimited possibility that informs the mind with boundless creativity. Vision sees time and eternity, emptiness and form, consciousness and its objects. Transpersonal vision gives access to an inner source of guidance and inspiration that transcends narrow personal perceptual frames. It is renewed, rather than depleted, by being shared. Illumination of vision occurs naturally when the mind is at peace. An empty mind and open heart become the matrix of wisdom wherein all possibilities may

be conceived.

## Healing and Wholeness

As the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, healing the whole begins with healing ourselves, our relationships and our world. Our inherent capacity for self-healing is empowered when we awaken to the vision of unity consciousness. We are challenged to see ourselves whole, free from egocentric attachment to form or outcome.

For the first time in history, humanity is confronting the necessity of seeing the world as a whole. Spirituality must also be addressed in global terms. An awareness that transcends cultural distinctions may be essential to human survival. The healing vision that sees beyond appearance and duality to the unity of spirit does not require belief in a personal deity; it does require a willingness to be aware, moment by moment, of what is true in our shared experience.

The desirability of sharing experiences, not just doctrines and ideas, is gradually becoming accepted. If we are to become persons of global vision, self-knowledge must deepen into awareness of universal spirituality. Abraham Maslow said that self-actualizing people are always involved in something beyond themselves (Maslow, 1971).

The wisdom needed for healing the world cannot be taught by words alone. It must be discovered within and applied in relationship. As we grow toward wholeness we may become more aware of our shared psychological and spiritual resources. Any situation may be perceived as an opportunity to heal the mind that generates conflict while caught in the illusion of separateness. A mind possessed by illusions can be healed when it awakens to transpersonal vision.

As we become conscious of wholeness, we can more effectively participate in the cocreation of our future. If we would participate in co-creating a future different from the past, a future that could heal the earth, we must begin by envisioning possibilities. Ken Wilber (1981) has suggested the following:

For those who have matured to a responsible, stable ego, the next stage of growth is the beginning of the transpersonal, the level of psychic intuition, of transcendent

openness and clarity, the awakening of a sense of awareness that is somehow more than the simple mind and body. To the extent that it does start to occur, there will be profound changes in society, culture, government, medicine, economics. . . .

[This] will mean a society of men and women who, by virtue of an initial glimpse into transcendence, will start to understand vividly their common humanity and brother/sisterhood; will transcend roles based on bodily differences of skin, color, and sex; will grow in mental-psychic clarity; will make policy decisions on the basis of intuition as well as rationality, will see the same Consciousness in each and every

soul, indeed, in all creation, and will start to act correspondingly; will find mental psychic consciousness to be transfigurative of body physiology, and adjust medical theory accordingly; will find higher motivations in men and women that will drastically alter economic incentives and economic theory; will understand psychological growth as evolutionary transcendence, and develop methods and institutions not just to cure emotional disease but foster the growth of consciousness; will see education as a discipline in transcendence, body to mind to soul, and regear educational theory and institutions accordingly, with special development; will find technology an appropriate aid to transcendence, not a replacement for it; will use mass media, instant telecommunication, and human/computer linkages as vehicles of bonding-consciousness and unity; will see outer space as not just an inert entity out there but also as a projection of inner or psychic spaces and explore it accordingly; will use appropriate technology to free the exchanges of the material level from chronic oppression; will find sexuality to be not just a play of reproductive desire but the initial base of kundalini sublimation into psychic spheres and will readjust marriage practices accordingly; will see cultural national differences as perfectly acceptable and desirable, but will see those differences on a background of universal and common consciousness; . . . will realize fully the transcendent unity of all Dharmakaya religions, and thus

respect all true religious preferences while condemning any sectarian claim to possess "the only way"; will realize that politicians, if they are to govern all aspects of life, will have to demonstrate an understanding and mastery of all aspects of lifebody to mind to soul to spirit. . . .

In short, a true Wisdom Culture will *start* to emerge. . . .

The vision of a world that is healed and whole, that provides a supportive environment for humanity and all other forms of life, is a possible dream. We must dare to dream of the qualities and values that are needed for healing and well-being. Everyone is given opportunities for service and creative participation. The challenge of our time is for each of us to do our part in creating a world we



would want for everyone. If we fail to choose our future, we may not have one. The state of the world, reflecting the state of our collective mind, indicates that we are badly in need of healing.

Will we awaken in time to the vision of wholeness that points the way to continuing creative participation in sustaining life on earth? Consciousness has, by necessity, become both the object and the instrument of change.

We must learn to apply what we know about healing ourselves to healing the world, and empower ourselves and each other in cocreating peaceful evolutionary alternatives to self-destruction. This is not a task that can be undertaken by anyone alone. We can no longer afford to wait for a heroic leader to rescue us. We have learned the hard way that evil cannot be conquered in battle. Conflict perpetuates the problem. It is, rather, our capacity for vision and

self-transcendence that must be recognized if present danger is to be transformed into opportunity for renewal. If we persist in our folly of wishful thinking and blaming others for our predicaments, we may forfeit the chance to grow into wisdom.

It is not impossible to envision a world where we can learn to live in harmony, in the light of the perennial wisdom of the great traditions. As we awaken from the dream of being isolated entities in a fragmented universe where individual thoughts, feelings, and actions make no difference, we see that our destiny is shared. By perceiving the unity of opposites we may begin to envision the emergence of a global spirituality concerned with the welfare of the whole rather than with particular forms of religious practice. A shared dream of healing and wholeness is no more improbable than others that we collectively entertain.

Each one of us has a unique function in healing

the whole. We can discover it by awakening the transpersonal vision and seeing things as they are. We have the capacity to turn problems into challenges and to encourage others to manifest a vision of wholeness. We can no longer afford to pretend to be children playing while the home we inhabit is being destroyed. We must acknowledge our responsibility for the world as it is and for choosing to change. In sharing a vision that transcends present limitations and inspires creative imagination, we become the visionmakers and healers of our time. As we learn to shift the focus of our attention from the

part to the whole, from the content to the context, we begin to expand limited perception and awaken vision.

Awakening transpersonal vision does not impose a new image on reality or provide ready answers to questions of the way-seeking mind. It does allow each of us to see for ourselves what is true. We cannot be satisfied with lies and illusions. We can delude ourselves temporarily, but true vision is not deceived. At times we may ask others for guidance, but ultimately we must learn to see for ourselves. Facing our collective challenge calls for a willingness to witness the pain of the human condition, to open our hearts and to heal the wounds of deprivation—physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. Let us begin by envisioning peace and healing within and among ourselves, that we may extend it in the world.

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## Chapter Three

### The Transformed Berserk:

### Unification of Psychic Opposites

*Marie-Louise von Franz, Ph.D.*

At the core of the relationship between individual transformation and social responsibility is the problem of psychic opposites. For, as Carl Gustav Jung once pointed out, "there always will be the two standpoints: the standpoint of the social leader who, if he is an idealist at all, seeks salvation in a more or less complete suppression of the individual, and the leader of minds who seeks improvement in the individual only." These two types "are necessary pairs of opposites which keep the world in balance." <sup>1</sup> Examples of social leaders with or without a feeling of responsibility for their



people are to be found everywhere in the limelight of the mass media. Therefore, I will try to describe in more detail an opposite example by choosing our only Swiss saint, Brother Niklaus of Flüe, a conscious leader of souls. He was a deeply introverted, solitary hermit who worked only to improve himself and yet became, all the same, *the* political savior of Switzerland.

Niklaus of Flüe was born on March 21, 1417, in the so-called "Flüeli," the slopes above Sachseln (Unterwalden), the son of an honorable local farmer, Heinrich von Flüe, and his wife, Emma Ruberta. The fifteenth century was a time in which the Catholic church was in a state of decay, corruption, and full of inner dissension, a fact which led many individuals to concentrate more on the search for inner guidance. Politically it was also a bad time in Switzerland, for the original Swiss mountain communities (Urkantone) were completely bled to death and disintegrated by the bad habit of its male youths

to run away from home and fight in foreign  
military services

(the so-called Reisläufen). Saint Niklaus himself did not take part in such mercenary activities, but we find his name on the lists of several warlike expeditions of his own country.

Apparently, he even became a captain but was said to have always tried to prevent unnecessary massacres and destruction. Around 1447 (when he was thirty years old) he married Dorothea Wyss and, in the course of time, they had ten children. From 1459 until 1462 he functioned as a judge and a member of the Council of Unterwalden. As a judge he often had to witness injustices and cases of bribery, which evoked in him deep indignation and disgust for all worldly occupations. Once, while in court, he had a vision of fire flowing out of the mouth of an unjust judge.

When he was about forty five years old, he began to suffer from a deep depression, with feelings of

resistance against his family and a longing to devote himself completely to his inner religious vocation. His friend, Heiny am Grund, the local priest of Kriens, advised him to do some regular prayer-exercises, but that was not very helpful. Finally Klaus managed to get the agreement of his wife (he was then about fifty years old) and left home with the intention of wandering into the unknown world as a sort of religious mendicant pilgrim.

But several incidents and an important vision he had near the Swiss border impelled him to return home. There, with the help of his friends and relations, he built a little hermit's cell about 250 meters from his home beside a deep shadowy creek called the Ranft, and he stayed there for the rest of his life, fasting almost completely, with the exception of receiving the host. He had many visionary states and slowly acquired such fame as a saintly healer and counselor that often up to six hundred people were waiting around his cell to

have a word with him.

When Klaus was sixty four years old, he became involved in the famous political incident of the meeting (Tagsatzung) and treaty of Stans on December 22, 1947. A conflict had exploded between some of the more democratic rural original Cantons (Urkantone) and the new, more aristocratically ruled town Cantons. A declaration of civil war was impending. At this moment the priest of Kriens, Heiny am Grund, ran through the whole night to Klaus's hermitage in Sachseln and begged Klaus to speak to the warring parties. Klaus agreed to address the two camps; he simply admonished the Swiss to keep

peace, to accept the two new town Cantons but not to expand their territory too far, and to settle their fight with a treaty. However, he suggested that if they were attacked, they should defend themselves valiantly. And such was the authority of Klaus that they unwillingly but humbly obeyed him and settled their quarrel. Had there been a war, Austria and France would have interfered and walked in, and Switzerland would most certainly have disappeared from the map forever. All of this is not legend, but hard historical fact.

The content of the message Klaus delivered was in itself not very special; it was in a way just common sense, something that any old farmer could have said. What had such an unusual effect was the awe in which everyone held him. Later, Klaus became a counselor of dukes and ambassadors in many other political affairs, and

thus actually achieved what Master Kung Fu-tse (Confucius) tried to do in China but failed on account of more unfavorable circumstances. But let us now turn to the deeper question: What is really behind such an unusual effect? In my view, an important vision of Niklaus of Flüe reveals more about this question. The following text is the description of this vision:

It seemed to him (to Brother Klaus) that a man resembling a pilgrim came to him. He had a stick in his hands, a hat with its brim folded down like a wanderer's hat, and a blue coat. And Klaus realized inwardly that the man came from the East or from far away. Though the pilgrim did not say so, Klaus knew that he came from *where the sun rises in summertime*. Then he stood before Klaus and sang the word: "Alleluja." When he began to sing, his voice reverberated and everything between heaven and earth sang with him. And Klaus heard three perfect words coming from a place of origin and then they were

shut away like with a snapping lock. When he heard these three words he could only speak of one word. When the pilgrim had finished his song, he asked Brother Klaus for an alm. Klaus suddenly had a penny in his hand which he dropped into the hat of the pilgrim. And this man (Klaus?) had never known before what a great honor it is to receive a gift of money in one's hat.

And Klaus wondered who the pilgrim was and where he came from. The Wanderer said: "I came from there," and did not want to say any more. Klaus stood before him and looked at him. In that moment he (the pilgrim) changed shape; he no longer had a hat on, but had a blue or greyish vest and no coat. He was a noble, good-



looking man, so that Klaus looked at him with pleasure and desire. His face was brownish, which gave him a noble look, his eyes black like a magnet, his limbs of eminent beauty. Though he had his clothes on, Klaus could see his limbs through them. As Klaus stared at him, the Wanderer looked at him too. In that moment great miracles happened: the mountain Pilatus crumbled and became completely flat and the earth opened up so that Klaus felt as though he could see the sins of the whole world. He saw a lot of people and behind them appeared the Truth, but all the people turned their backs to it and in their hearts he saw a great disease, a tumor as big as two fists. This tumor was selfishness, which seduces people so much that they cannot stand the man's (the Truth's) glance, which to them was like fire so that they ran about in great confusion and shame and finally ran away, but the Truth remained.

And then his (the pilgrim's) face changed like a "Veronica" and Klaus felt a great desire to see more of him. Then he saw him again as he had been before, but his clothes had changed and he stood before him as if he had on a bearskin, a vest and bearskin leggings. The fur was interspersed with golden sparks, but Klaus saw clearly that it was the skin of a bear. The bearskin suited him very well, so that he (Klaus) saw that it was of special beauty. As he stood before him, so nobly in his bearskin, Klaus realized that he wanted to leave. He asked: "Where do you want to go?" He answered: "I will go up the country," and he did not want to say more. When he left, Klaus stared after him and saw that the bearskin shone as when someone moves a well-cleaned sword and one can see its reverberations on the wall. And he thought that this was something hidden from him. When the Wanderer had gone about four steps away he turned around, took off his hat and bowed to Klaus. Klaus realized that

there was such great love in the Wanderer for him that he was quite smitten and confessed that he had not earned such love and then he saw that this love was in him. And he saw that his spirit, face, eyes, and his whole body was full of loving humility, like a vessel brimful of honey. Then he saw the Wanderer no more, but he was so satisfied that he did not desire anything more. It seemed that everything there is between heaven and earth had been revealed to him.

This great vision would need many hours of interpretation, but here I can only point out some essential aspects of it. This pilgrim

is obviously an image of what Jung has called the Self (in contrast to the ego) that is Klaus's eternal inner spiritual core, something like the "inner Christ" in the writings of the mystics. But though the pilgrim sings the Biblical word "Allelujah" (praise to God), his clothes clearly characterize him as Wotan, a Germanic god of War, Truth, Ecstasy, and of shamanic wisdom. According to some myths, Wotan was always walking about as a wanderer visiting people, wearing a grey-blue coat and a wide-brimmed hat and looking very aristocratic with flaming eyes. Other myths describe that he could constantly change his shape; therefore he was often called Svipall, the changing one, or Grimmir, the masked one, or Tveggi, the two-fold one. In Klaus's vision, he comes from the place of sunrise, the symbolic place from which new illuminations and revelations from the collective unconscious arise. This connection is reflected in the saying

that something "dawns on us."

Later in the vision, the wanderer appears as personified Truth behind the backs of people. Wotan too had the epithet "Sannr"-true. He was said to have second sight and could open all mountains and "see and take what was in them" (Snorri Sturluson). Seen in a Christian context, the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Truth, but here it is strangely blended with the old Germanic God of Ecstasy, Love, and Spiritual Devotion. This pilgrim conveys to Klaus a feeling of knowing everything between heaven and earth, that is, he imparts to Klaus what Jung called the "absolute knowledge" of the unconscious, which is typical for many experiences of the Self.

But even more, he conveyed to Klaus a feeling of infinite love, described as a vessel brimming over with honey. This motif of the honey reminds one of a verse in the Brhadaranyaka-Upanishad, which runs: "The Self is honey of all beings and all beings are honey of this Self. Likewise, this

bright immortal person is this Self and that bright immortal person, the Self (both are madhu-honey). He indeed is the same as that Self, that Immortal, that Brahman, that All." 2 "And verily the Self is the lord of all beings, the king of all beings. And as all spokes are contained in the axle and in the felly of the wheel, all beings and all those Selves (of earth, water, etc.) are contained in the Self."3 Madhu-honey meant here, as Max Müller explains, an objective complete interdependence or interconnectedness of all things, the same that Jung would call "objective love," in contrast to ordinary subjective love, which is full of ego projections and desires.

But the most amazing and unorthodox motif in this vision of Brother Klaus is the bearskin that the pilgrim wears. It is a detail which again points to Wotan who, among other titles, was called *hrammibear's* paw, as the god of the berserkers. In the Old Testament the bear represents the dark side of Jahweh, and in Nordic shamanism the bear is the most frequent "helping spirit" or ally of the shaman. In most northern countries of Europe, the bear was so sacred in former times that one only spoke of him as "the Father," "the Holy Man," "the Holy Woman," "the Wise Father," or "the Goldfoot."

For the old Germans to wear a bearskin means to be a beriserkra berserk. Going berserk was the parapsychological gift inherited in certain Germanic warrior families. It was a divine ecstasy, a kind of "holy rage." Such people were said to faint and fall to the ground as though they

were dead, while their soul left their body in the form of a bear and was then seen raging in the battle, killing all enemies, but, sometimes by mistake, also their own people. The basic mood in going berserk was called *grimr*, which translates as "anger." To go berserk was also called "hamfong," which means changing one's skin or shape and also shadow or ally (Schutzgeist). To sum this up, the bear aspect of the holy pilgrim in Klaus's vision is the dangerous, uncanny animal shadow of the Self.

Jung writes in a letter about this very vision: a "man charged with *mana*, or numinous man, has theriomorphic attributes, since he surpasses the ordinary man not only upwards but also downwards." <sup>4</sup> The vision of the berserk shows the figure of the inner Christ in two forms: "1. as a pilgrim who, like the mystic, has gone on the *peregrinatio animae*; 2. as a bear whose pelt contains the golden luster." The latter alludes to the "new sun" in alchemy, a new illumination.



And Jung continues: "The meaning of the vision may be as follows: On his spiritual pilgrimage and in his instinctual (bear-like, i.e., hermit-like) subhumanness Brother Klaus recognizes himself as Christ. . . . The brutal coldness of feeling that the saint needed in order to abandon his wife and children and friends is encountered in the subhuman animal realm. Hence the saint throws an animal shadow. . . . Whoever can suffer within himself the highest united with the lowest is healed, holy, whole. The vision is trying to show him (Klaus) that the spiritual pilgrim and the Beriserkr are both Christ, and this opens the way to forgiveness of the great sin which

holiness is." Later in his life Klaus had a frightening vision of God's wrath, "because this wrath is aimed at him, who has betrayed his nearest and dearest and the ordinary man for God's sake."

The Christ-Berserk of Brother Klaus's vision thus unites irreconcilable opposites, subhuman wildness and Christian spirituality, the rage of the warrior and Christian *agape* love of mankind and only because Klaus had given space to this inner figure in himself was he able to unite the opposites outside, to convince his countrymen to keep peace instead of getting swept away into civil war.

In order to understand how this actually works we must consider certain basic facts of depth psychology. Let us look at the situation depicted on the diagram.

The outermost dots, A, A, A, represent the *ego consciousness* of human beings. Below is a psychic layer, B, B, B, which represents the sphere of the

so-called *personal unconscious*, which is that psychic layer that Freud discovered: the sphere of forgotten and repressed

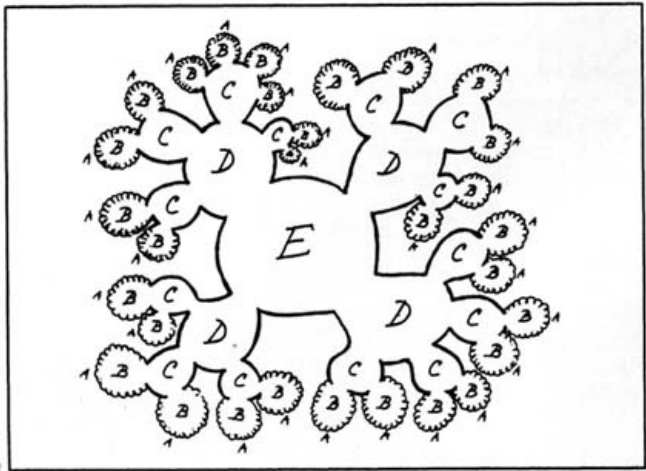


Figure 1.

Diagram showing the structure of the unconscious. Aego consciousness,  
 Bpersonal unconscious,  
 Cgroup unconscious, Dunconscious of large national units, Euniversal  
 archetypal structures.

memories, desires, and impulses. Below it comes the layer, C, C, C, which is a kind of *group unconscious*, as it manifests in family therapy or group therapy; it contains the common reactions and complexes of whole groups, clans, tribes, etc. Below it we have D, D, D, which would be the *common unconscious of wide national units*. We can, for instance, see that Australian or South American Indian mythologies form such a wider "family" of relatively similar religious motifs which, however, they do not share with all of mankind. An example would be the motif of catching and weakening a demonic figure of the sun, a motif that we find in the Far East but not in the West. Finally, the center circle, E, would represent the sum of those *universal psychic archetypal structures* that we share with the whole of mankind, such as the archetypal idea of mana, the hero, the cosmic god-man, the mother earth, the helpful animal, or the trickster figure,

which we find in all mythologies and all religious systems.

Whenever an individual works on his own unconscious he invisibly affects first the group (when he reaches C); and if he goes even deeper, he affects the large national units (layer D), or sometimes even all of humanity (layer E). Not only does he change and transform himself but he has an imperceptible impact on the unconscious psyche of many other people. That is why Kung Fu-tse (Confucius) said: "The superior man abides in his room. If his words are well spoken, he meets with assent at a distance of more than a thousand miles." 5

The collective unconscious is actually like an atmosphere in which we are all contained and by which we are affected. One of the most important images in E, the common center, is the image of a god-man or cultural hero, which we find practically in all cultural communities (Christ, Osiris, Avalokiteshvara); let us call it the

symbol of the *Anthropôs*. In contrast to various gods, ghosts and demons, who symbolize the more autonomous special impulses in the collective psyche, Anthropôs represents *that* aspect of the collective unconscious which appears *integrated in man as his specific cultural consciousness or religion*.

There seems to exist a basic law in the development of religious cultural communities the periodic falling apart and decay or renewal and reunion of its elements. In principle, all single instinctual drives, such as sexual impulses, aggression, power, or self-preservation, have a physiological and a symbolic, that is psychological or spiritual, aspect. On an archaic level these two aspects work completely to-

gether; that means that the ritual and physical activities and their representatives are one. But in the course of historical development these two aspects often tend to get separated; then the ritual and religious doctrines become only rigid spiritual formalisms against which the physiological instincts revolt. This is a situation of conflict that is needed for the development of higher consciousness. But the conflict can also go too far and become destructive. This then requires reconciliation of the opposites. Such a situation calls for an anamnesis of the original man, the archetype of man as the Anthropôs, who is at the core of all great religions. In the idea of a *homo maximus*, the Above and Below of creation are reunited. <sup>6</sup>

*The Christ-Berserk in Klaus's vision is such a spontaneous emergence of a complete Anthropôs figure which complements the*

*official incomplete image of Christ.* But this vision of Christ as a berserk overflowing with Eros is not an isolated image turning up in an unusual individual, but it reaches back and is connected with a long hidden historical continuity. There exists, as Jung has shown, an unofficial development of the Christ-figure within the whole of Western Christian culture in its two thousand-year-old tradition. In this book *Aion*,<sup>7</sup> Jung points out that in the Apocalypse (5, 6) a lamb appears, with seven horns and eyes, a monstrous figure not at all resembling the sacrificial lamb that is traditionally associated with Christ. It is praised as victor in battle (17, 14) and as the "lion of the tribe of Judah" (5, 5). It looks therefore, as if at the end of time a certain shadow aspect of Christ returns and reunites with his figure, a shadow that Christ had cast away before. If one compares the ecclesiastical image of Christ with that of God in the Old Testament, he does not seem to incarnate that God completely. Jahweh himself is of



infinite goodness, just as he shows infinite cruel rage and vengefulness; in contrast, Christ incarnates only the former aspect. This probably is the reason why he himself predicted that, in a process of reversal, the figure of Antichrist would rise at the end of the Christian aeon. However, the demonic ram of the Apocalypse is not an Antichrist figure, it is rather a reborn or reformed or completed Christ symbol, in which certain dark vengeful aspects are integrated rather than split off.

Perhaps this is a partial return to Jewish ideas of a belligerent messiah, born out of an anti-Roman resentment. The Christian answer to the realization of the good-evil double nature of God was first unequivocal: God is only good and Christ, his incarnation in man,

is only good too. From approximately the year 1000 of the Christian era, this symbolic religious answer became doubtful. The problem of evil became more and more urgent. There existed in this respect two possibilities: the first of these was the official idea that an anti-Christian movement would arise and undo, on a grand scale, all of the cultural and moral achievements Christ had brought forth. A second possible development was also brought up from the unconscious; this was the idea to complete the figure of Christ into a good *and* evil figure a true union of opposites.

In his *Answer to Job* <sup>8</sup> Jung proposed that in the Apocalypse one could see an image of this second development. There appears a woman with a crown of twelve stars on her head who is persecuted by a dragon. She gives birth to a male child but, subsequently, they are both carried

away and disappear in heaven. This seems like a vision of a reborn Christ-figure, the anticipation of the collective unconscious of a more complete symbol of Self which is no longer split into a good and an evil half.

This idea of a more complete Christ-figure also haunted the minds of many medieval alchemists. Their "philosophers' stone," which they likened to Christ, was not just exclusively good; he was a union of opposites. And more than that, he also united spirit and matter, as well as man and animal. He was not only a savior of souls like Christ, but a savior of the whole of the nature of the macrocosm.

If we look at the outer history of our Western Christian civilization, this union of opposites has not, or at least not yet, been realized. On the contrary, Europe is split between the so-called Christian Western half and the openly anti-Christian Eastern half; large parts of the rest of the world then side with one or the other. The

openly anti-Christian spiritual development in Europe began in the Renaissance, that is, in the time of Brother Klaus. It is, therefore, amazing to consider that at that very time, quite independently and spontaneously, Klaus's unconscious brought up a Christ-figure who, like the alchemical stone, *unites the opposites*. The dark aspect is a berserk, harking back to the pagan Germanic tradition. If we consider what that Wotanic German berserk did in the Second World War, we can realize what terrible destructiveness this means when it is autonomous and no longer united with its opposite. Jung called World War II a Wotanic experiment and remarked that apparently we are now preparing for still another Wotanic experiment, but this time on a world-

wide scale. Such an explosion is only possible if the berserk shadow, that is, aggression, remains autonomous and is not integrated within the inner totality of man.

In confining himself, in his desperate depression, to his hermitage in the Ranft, Brother Klaus forced his shadow to remain within, where it became amalgamated with the inner Christ in him. It is worth noting: *We* cannot integrate such divine powers of aggression in our ordinary selves. All that hopeful benevolent talk about integrating one's aggression is nonsense. We can only, through our efforts and suffering, bring forth an integration of these forces within the Self. In other words, we can only integrate our own personal shadow, but not the collective shadow of the Self, or the dark side of the godhead.

However, by suffering to the absolute extreme

under the problem of opposites and by accepting it within ourselves, we can sometimes become a place in which the divine opposites spontaneously come together. That is what obviously happened to Brother Klaus; his vision showed him that in the Self the divine opposites had become one and this united figure was now overflowing with honey, that is, with love. It is a love which emanates from the total, the individual man, and not from his different complexes or impulses.

Interesting parallels to this process can be found in alchemical writings. In a way that greatly resembles Klaus's vision of the cosmic berserk filled with honey, many alchemists praised their philosopher's stone as a living being emanating "rose-colored blood" or "hue" which has a healing effect on its surroundings. This is one of the strangest images that can be found in the alchemical texts. The Paracelsist, Gerald Dorn, says, for instance, about the philosopher's stone:

(The philosophers) "called their stone animate because, at the final operations . . . a dark red liquid, like blood, sweats out drop by drop. . . . And for this reason they have prophesied that in the last days a most pure (*putus* = genuine, unalloyed) man, through whom the world will be freed, will come to earth and will sweat bloody drops of a rosy or red hue, whereby the world will be redeemed from its Fall. In like manner, too, the blood of their stone will free the leprous metals and also men from their diseases. . . . In the blood of this stone is hidden its soul, which is in his blood." <sup>9</sup> Another alchemist, Henricus Khunrath, mentions the same blood as that of a "lion lured forth from the Saturnine mountain."<sup>10</sup> There

we have, like the bear in Klaus's vision, a lion from the "Saturnine mountain," also a wild animal which comes from the places of darkness and depression, but brings forth the healing blood of love. The same Khunrath also speaks elsewhere of that "rose-colored Blood . . . that flows forth . . . from the side of the innate Son of the Great World," that is, of an intracosmic Christ-figure who is the "Healer of all imperfect bodies and men." <sup>11</sup> Unlike the Biblical Christ, he is not only a savior of men, but also like the alchemical Christ, or Lapis, a healer of all nature.

"It seems," writes Jung, "as though the rose-colored blood of the alchemical redeemer was derived from a rose mysticism that penetrated into alchemy. It expresses a certain kind of *healing Eros*. This Eros emanates from the *homo totus*, the cosmic man whom Dorn called *putissimus* = unalloyed. This most pure or most



true man must be no other than what he is . . . he must be entirely man, a man who *knows and possesses everything human and is not adulterated by any influence or admixture from without.*" He will appear, according to Dorn, only "in the last days." "He cannot be Christ, for Christ by his blood has already redeemed the world. . . . It is much rather the alchemical savior of the universe, representing the still unconscious idea of the whole and complete man, who shall bring about what the sacrificial death of Christ has obviously left unfinished, namely the deliverance of the world from evil. . . . His blood is a psychic substance, the manifestation of a certain kind of Eros which unifies the individual, as well as the multitude, in the sign of the rose and makes them whole."<sup>12</sup>

In the sixteenth century the Rosicrucian movement began, whose motto, "per crucem ad rosam," was anticipated by the alchemists. Such movements, Jung points out,<sup>13</sup> "as also the

emergence of the idea of Christian charity with its emotional overtones, are always indicative of a corresponding social defect which they serve to compensate. In the perspective of history, we can see clearly enough what this defect was in the ancient world; and in the Middle Ages as well, with its cruel and unreliable laws and feudal conditions, human rights and human dignity were in a sorry plight." And, we can add, so were the social conditions of Brother Klaus's time. It seems, therefore, that this berserk full of honey, which is Eros, turned up in his vision because, as we know, Klaus worried very much

about the social injustices and cruelties which occurred in his surroundings.

But what kind of love could this be? As Jung stresses, love taken in itself is useless without a certain amount of understanding. "And for the proper use of understanding a wider consciousness is needed, and a higher standpoint to enlarge one's horizon. . . . Certainly love is needed . . . but a love combined with insight and understanding. Their function is to illuminate regions that are still dark and to add them to consciousness. . . . The blinder love is, the more it is instinctual, and the more it is attended by destructive consequences, for it is a dynamism that needs form and direction." <sup>14</sup> We can see this when mothers love their children so much that they suffocate them, or collectively when, out of love, we try to develop so-called undeveloped countries by brutally imposing upon them our

ideas and technology. Out of so-called love, innumerable crimes and destruction have been brought upon man, and the more sentimental love is, the more brutal the shadow that follows it. By contrast, in the symbol of the berserk-Christ, the brutal shadow (the bear aspect) is integrated into the human figure and thus no longer acts autonomously behind its back.

The whole problem is an ethical one; it is a problem of differentiating our feelings. Western civilizations of late have one-sidedly developed extroverted thinking and sensation in their technology, and introverted sensation-thinking in their theoretical studies. Intuition is also not quite suppressed because it is needed for finding new creative ideas. But feeling and the whole world of Eros, love, is in a sorry plight indeed. I even think that at present everything depends on whether we succeed in developing our feeling and social Eros or not.

It is psychologically impossible to say what Eros

is, for it is an archetypal power far beyond our comprehension. At the bottom of it if we observe it from an empirical angle there seems to lie a *participation mystique*, what Jung called archaic identity. It is an unconscious conformity of collective ideas or feeling values. On it is based the general assumption that what is good for us is also good for the other, that I have the right to correct other people, and that altogether the other person is basically like myself. This is an original, basic, gregarious, instinctive bond among all men, but it can even extend to animals, plants, and other outer objects. Even

Christian love of one's neighbor or Buddhistic compassion are ultimately based on this deep-rooted instinctual condition. The symbolic image of the Anthropô's, or divine man, contains this aspect insofar as he is mythologically often spoken of as the basic material from which the whole cosmos was made, like the Purusha in India, P'an ku in Chinese mythology, the giant Ymir in the German genesis, Gayomart in Persia, or Osiris-Rê in Egypt. The Judaeo-Christian figure of the first Adam and the second Adam (Christ) also have this aspect. According to certain Midrashim, for instance, Adam was first a cosmic giant in whom all the souls of mankind "were united, like strands in a wick." And Christ has the same function in relation to the Christian community; we are all supposedly brothers and sisters "in Christ."

The phenomenon of archaic identity does not,

however, sufficiently take into account that there are also great differences among all human beings. They manifest in archaic conditions in tribal wars between different groups of people and sometimes even in chaotic social conditions where everybody fights everybody, as was the case in certain times of interregnum, as J. G. Fraser has shown. This fact of inevitable personal tensions and hostilities forces us to recognize that other people are sometimes different and that they do not always behave according to our expectations. This leads to a phenomenon which Jung calls *the taking back of projections*, that is to wake up to the realization that certain of our assumptions and judgments about other people are not true for them, but only for ourselves. Such a realization is still very rare and I think we are only now at the very beginning of this wider realization. Especially where there are really great differences, as for instance between man and woman, or between far-away ethnic groups of people and us, the

search for and the realization of projections is of paramount importance.

Only when projections are withdrawn, does *relationship*, as contrasted with archaic identity, become possible; however, this presupposes psychological knowledge. We have embassies in foreign countries which are supposed to provide us with such psychological knowledge. How poorly that still works is unfortunately well-known. In all pluralistic, democratically organized societies there is an attempt to somehow regulate the cooperation of different groups and individuals without forcing them to adhere completely to the rules of archaic collective identity. In contrast to the latter, *relationship* includes



the idea of a *certain distance*. Jung writes: "one of the most important and difficult tasks in the individuation process is to bridge the distance between people. There is always a danger that the distance will be broken down by one party only (intruding into the other's realm of concerns), and this invariably gives rise to a feeling of violation followed by resentment. Every relationship has its optimal distance, which of course has to be found by trial and error." <sup>15</sup> We are still probably aeons away from realizing such a state of free mutual interrelatedness among all human beings. A profound respect for the real "otherness" of the other being or ethnical group is needed as well as the intimacy of a feeling of identity. But even this is not yet the ultimate stage of possible development. It is obvious that on the surface (outer lines of our model) this would cause too great a fragmentation or isolation of the conscious individual egos. There

exists another stage, however, which I would like to call a *personal connection of fate through the Self with selected people*. It is like a return to the first stage but on a higher, more conscious level. It is a relationship with the Self in the other person, with her or his totality and oneness of opposites. Only love and not mind can understand the other person in this way. This form of love, Jung writes, "is not transference and it is more primitive, more primeval and more spiritual, than anything we can describe. That upper floor is no more you or I, it means many, including yourself and anybody whose heart you touch. There is no distance, but immediate presence. It is an eternal secret how shall I ever explain it?"<sup>16</sup>

One could perhaps say that it is a *timeless connection in eternity* which, however, in *this* world, in our space-time, appears as that mysterious something which makes any deep real encounter of two human beings possible. It

occurs when, meeting somebody for the first time, one has the feeling that one has "known" the other for all eternity, and this is not an error, as it is sometimes on account of ordinary archaic identity, but it proves to be true. This kind of relationship can appear between people of the same sex, as for instance in the "eternal" relationship of certain masters with their pupils, but more frequently in the love between man and woman, who represent the greatest opposites among mankind. According to Jung, this latter problem of relationship lies at the *core* of all problems of modern mankind. Either we can bridge these opposites within ourselves or we will contribute to the explosion of wars outside.

Personal love is the only existing compensation for the fragmentationeven atomizationof modern society. In it the image of the Anthropô's might reappear again and with it "the Truth" behind people's backs, as Klaus saw it in his vision.

Brother Klaus was not at all weak and sentimental. In his consultations, he unhesitatingly uncovered the lies and hidden sins of his clients, but at the same time he did this always with a twinkle of humor in his eyes and with helpful warmth. Since these are characteristics of a good therapist, Jung has said that Klaus should be made the patron saint of psychotherapy. It was somehow the personified Truth of his vision of the bearskin pilgrim which acted through him. His love or warmth was always directed towards the individual before him, for the relationships of an individuated person are always unique*from one unique being to another unique being.*

Only within such relationships can our soul come alive and can the transpersonal Self be constellated. With it (as the berserk-Christ figure shows) a certain inner dualism in the Self is united into one.

I am convinced that if Brother Klaus had not had this berserk figure behind him he could not have appeased the meeting of Stans. This berserk is a visible image of that invisible authority which emanated from him and made the warring parties settle their conflict. In this way Klaus achieved politically more than any ruler or ambassador could have done. He is a wonderful example of how individual transformation and universal responsibility can be united. Naturally, Brother Klaus is a unique example, which we cannot simply choose to imitate. In everybody's inner evolution these opposites of individual transformation versus collective responsibility take on a different form and nuance.

In the *I Ching*,<sup>17</sup> in the first chapter on the

creative principle, there is one line which refers to this problem. It is the fourth line, which runs: "Wavering flight over the depths. No blame." and the Comment runs:

A place of transition has been reached, and free choice can enter in. A twofold possibility is presented to the great man: he can soar to the heights and play an important part in the world, or he can withdraw into solitude and develop himself. He can go the way of the hero or that of the holy sage who seeks seclusion. There is no general law to say which of the

two is the right way. Each one in this situation must make a free choice according to the inner law of his being. If the individual acts consistently and is true to himself, he will find the way that is appropriate for him.

Compared to such holy sages as Lao-tse or Chuang-tse, Brother Klaus is less only as the figure of a retired hermit. In the first half of his life, he took part in all the activities of ordinary outer life; only when an inner call found him, did he leave the world. At first, he tried arduously to "imitate Christ" and practice the Christian love of one's neighbor, but then the berserka deeply introverted fierce need to follow his own inner truth overcame him. And what was perhaps the greatest miracle was that the people around him did not interpret this as madness. Some theologians tried to criticize him for leaving his family, but the general public all around him and mostly the people of Unterwalden stood up for him and saw in his retirement the sign of a divine

call and not a sign of social madness or irresponsibility. I think this comes from the honey-Eros aspect of the berserk pilgrim figure that these people must have felt in him.

Returning to our sketch, the central sphere of the collective unconscious is in most religions represented by an Anthropô's figure, a symbol of a god-man or cosmic man. Thus the berserk represents, in a paradoxical way, the greater personality of the Self of Brother Klaus and simultaneously the Self of the whole collective. In this latter aspect it was and still is today a *living archetype*. During World War II, some Swiss regiments had a collective vision of Brother Klaus standing at the Swiss border towards Germany, spreading his arms out to protect Switzerland from being invaded by Hitler. The greater archetypal core of Klaus is, in this way, still alive today in Switzerland.

Modern zoologists like Konrad Lorenz and innumerable psychologists write today about the



problem of aggression and how to integrate, abreact, or suppress it. Brother Klaus's vision shows us how he *really* succeeded in integrating and transforming it. Then it is no longer what we call aggression but rather a clearly defined separateness and firmness of the individual which succeeds in remaining steadfastly in "himself" and does not succumb to group or mass suggestions. In many collective panic situations in a nation, everything depends on whether or not some individuals can keep

their heads and not succumb to the general paranoiac emotion. That, according to Jung, is the only way to avoid war.

This is still clearly a very remote goal for humanity and in the meantime nations and groups will inevitably go on fighting each other. But one thing seems sure to me: we have reached a point in history where the differentiation of Eros has become of paramount importance, because the world has become so small that we *have* to realize we are all in the same boat.

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## Chapter Four

# On Getting to Know One's Inner Enemy: Transformational Perspectives on the Conflict of Good and Evil

*Ralph Metzner, Ph.D.*

The shadow, the id, the beast, the devil, the monster, the adversary—these are some of the many names of a psychological complex that is present in all human beings. We can regard it as a psychic image that functions as an inner opponent, our opposite, with whom we struggle and argue throughout our lives. To reconcile this opposition has been recognized as a central challenge on the part of individuation, or self-transformation. Ancient wisdom of East and West and modern transpersonal philosophy and psychology affirm that getting to know these

opposites, seeing them as aspects of our being, is essential to growth and wholeness. C. G. Jung, following Nicholas of Cusa, referred to this as the *coincidentia oppositorum*, "the co-incidence of opposites"the acceptance and reconciliation of two polarized facets of our nature. According to Nicholas, the dualities in opposition, existing throughout all of Nature, including human nature, are the wall that makes God invisible to man."

The *good/evil* or *good/bad* judgment is often superimposed on other dualities. When superimposed on the duality of male and female, we get sexist attitudes of women as inferior and men superior, or the reverse. When superimposed on the duality of human and animal, we get images of monsters, dragons, beasts, and fear of our

own and others' bestial impulses and passions. When this judgment is superimposed on religious, racial, cultural, or national difference, we get bigotry, racism, chauvinism, and the prejudices that separate and antagonize the in-group versus the out-group, or the notorious *us* versus *them* (Russians/Americans, Nazis/Jews, blacks/whites, etc.).

The *good/bad* or *good/evil* judgment is often superimposed on the duality of spirit and matter, or spirit and body, or Spirit and Nature. The spiritual realm of the human being is then regarded as *good*, *light*, or *higher*; and the material world, the realm of Nature and the body is seen as *inferior*, *dark*, *fallen* or *sinful*. Sometimes, paradoxically, the superimposition is reversed: The Self, or Spirit, is identified with the shadow it is feared or hated. This happens when we deny or reject our higher nature, the spiritual



aspect of our being. Paul Ricoeur, in his book, *The Symbolism of Evil* (1967), has even suggested that evil is always essentially connected to the sacred; that it is an inverse reflection of the sacred. I suggest a more limited view. For individuals who have an image of God as a punitive, terrifying, or judgmental deity, an encounter with the divine or higher Self may well be traumatic and overwhelming. We see this kind of ego-annihilating encounter portrayed in the story of Job, or of Jacob wrestling with the angel, or of Saul on the road to Damascus, being struck blind by God.

Our task of transformation in relation to these dualities is integration: We must bring about a coexistence of the oppositethe male and the female balanced in a wholeness that transcends both; the human and the animal integrated in a peaceful inner friendship or alliance; the self and its shadow come to terms. We must make friends with the inner enemy; or, if not friends, then at

least, and at first, we must get to know our inner adversary. We must get to the point where we can truthfully say, with the Roman poet Terentius, "nothing that is human is alien to me" (*nil humanum mihi alienum*).

Throughout history people have experienced this entity that we call evil in many different ways. A common thread is the recognition that something is wrong. A mistake has been made or something horrible has occurred, or something uncanny, something that threatens reality. This wrong must be corrected or dealt with in some way.

Our feeling of wrongness or mistakenness derives from our capacity for judgment. According to Judaic-Christian mythology, the result of eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was

precisely that Adam and Eve, and all humanity descended from them, acquired this power of judgment. <sup>1</sup> While the ability to make discriminative judgments is undoubtedly essential to survival, and hence not something to be eliminated or suspended, spiritual traditions have consistently pointed out that this judging tendency is also one of the chief obstacles to a development of clear understanding. Judgment, especially prejudgment, contracts and distorts our perception, as expressed in Christ's parable about the beam in our eye, to which we are oblivious while we are judging the mote in someone else's eye. According to the Jewish Kabbalah, evil occurs when the function of discrimination or judgment (*Gevurah*) is separated from its natural complement loving kindness or mercy (*Hesed*). The implication is that discriminative judgment must be integrated with kindness or compassion for this opposite to

be transformed.

We must discuss various experiences that human beings have had of evil, and the processes involved in its transformation. In the first section *On Integrating the Shadow*, we consider Jung's metaphor for the dark, evil, or destructive aspect of the psyche, and how this transformative integration is brought about. In the second section we look at the notion that the dark or evil side of our nature is what the conscious self-concept finds unacceptable; the transformational challenge is *Accepting the Unacceptable*. As described in the third section, *From Denial to Affirmation*, that which has been denied, negated, repressed, has to be brought into our awareness and recognized. In the fourth section, *Purification and Elimination*, we explore the imagery of evil as sin, corruption, defilement, and how this can be transformed. Then, in the section entitled *From Inner Warfare to Inner Peace*, we explore different approaches to the

understanding and resolution of inner conflict and opposition. The final section, *On Facing One's Demons*, examines the experiential reality behind the many myths of demons, devils, and evil spirits.

There is a difference between the judgment *good/bad* and the judgment *good/evil*, although they have in common that they are both judgments imposed on experience. The judgments we make are a function of our conditioning of cultural and familiar values that we have accepted. The difference is that *bad* suggests that something is useless, worthless, inferior to be ignored, or eliminated, or possibly changed and made better. We are not horrified by something we think of as bad. Evil, on the other hand, is much more dynamic.

It is a force or tendency that actively opposes the good, that tries to destroy, negate, tear down, kill. It frightens and horrifies us. Traditionally it was said that the devil, the embodiment of evil, opposes everything we do towards enlightenment, or tries to block our approach to the realm of Spirit, Self, and God.

## On Integrating The Shadow

The shadow, in Jung's psychology, is described as a "dark" (meaning unconscious) aspect of the personality. It has an emotional charge and presents a significant moral opposition to the ego-personality. Integrating the shadow is regarded as an essential step in the process of individuation. We must be able to recognize and acknowledge the existence in ourselves of dark, destructive tendencies.

A much more difficult task confronts us when, as

is often the case, the dark aspects within are not recognized, and the intense, primitive feelings are projected onto other people in our environment. They, the others, then are the ones who are bad, evil or dangerous; this permits us to maintain unconsciousness of our own dark aspects. As Jung wrote, "projections change the world into the replica of one's own unknown face." <sup>2</sup> The projections need to be withdrawn: we need to "own" our shadow, so that its destructive impact can be neutralized within our own psyche. This is undoubtedly one of the most difficult and elusive problems we may encounter in our self-examination, or in psychotherapy.

The principal reason for working on integrating the shadow aspect in ourselves is that we cannot recognize it for what it is when it is bound up in projections. This was Jung's analysis of the phenomenon of Hitler and the Germans: Because the German people denied the existence of the shadow aspect within themselves, they did not

recognize the incarnation of the collective shadow represented by Hitler (C. G. Jung, 1970). Many thousands of Germans, including Jews, simply refused to believe what they heard about concentration camps. And yet clearly, for a person to be susceptible to being influenced by the collective shadow, as the Germans were influenced by Hitler, there has to be some correspondence in the individual's psychic constitution. We must have within us some of that same tendency. It is this personal correspondence that makes us vulnerable to infection by the collective shadow as expressed by psychopathic



demagogues or propagandists. We need to make ourselves immune to the propaganda of evil.

More current examples of this phenomenon can be found in the political rhetoric of East and West. Some American politicians and journalists foster the image of the Russians as the "enemy" (the word "evil" has even been used about them), which means that we deny the same behavior and attitudes in ourselves; and Russians, of course, similarly see in us only capitalist warmongers. The dangerous consequences of such delusional projections to the peace and stability of the entire world are painfully obvious. <sup>3</sup>

It may seem unbelievable, but it is a fact that opposites, such as black and white, metaphorically represent the individual and his or her inner opponent; they may occur as symbols in dreams and altered state experiences and can create conflict. For example, to a member of the

white race, black may symbolize *bad* or *evil*. It must be remembered that we are dealing with the symbolic language of the psyche, in which any form or pattern can be used to stand for any other form or pattern.

The most immediate conclusion of practical value for self-transformation that one could draw from this metaphor is that each of us needs to discover how we symbolize to ourselves the aspect of our personality referred to as the shadow. In some of us it might be a black or dark person; in others it might be a white person; in yet others, a beast. Their effect on us is what defines these images: They frighten, threaten, attack, violate, and oppose us in every way. Those images we find ourselves avoiding or trying to suppress are precisely the ones we must bring into the light of awareness.

## Accepting The Unacceptable

While it is probably true for most people that the

"shadow" is a kind of aggregate of destructive, violent, and aggressive impulses, this need not always be the case. For example, a professional killer or psychopathic sadist who consciously and intentionally indulges in destructive or murderous actions, is not expressing the shadow side. Such an individual has no difficulty accepting and expressing feelings of murderous hatred, and this behavior is not the opposite of any conscious purpose or conscience in their psyche.

For such people, values are reversed, and they cannot recognize or express feelings of tenderness, compassion or kindness. What is in the shadow, in the darkness of unconsciousness, are the good feelings and impulses. For transformation to take place in these people, there must be an integration of these good feelings.

We all clearly differ in which of our traits and qualities we regard as unacceptable. For some it may be sexuality, for others aggressiveness, for yet others, laziness or inertia. One person's shadow may be quite innocuous and acceptable to another. What makes some part of our nature *shadow* is not its destructiveness per se; it is the fact that we are unconscious of this aspect. That which is consciously unacceptable to us, yet lives somehow in the unconscious layers of the psyche, is what causes problems.

Thus, in some ways, the notion of something unacceptable, and therefore hidden, is perhaps more appropriate than the symbol of the shadow (something dark). One may have a feeling of rejection or exclusion toward some part of the psychesome thought, feeling, or impulse. This part is excluded from awareness, and from the conscious sense of self, or identity. This alien element is rejected, split off, separated from awareness, not acknowledged. In the process of individuation it must be acknowledged and assimilated. For wholeness, we need to accept the unacceptable a paradoxical challenge indeed!

It is quite likely that this process of splitting off or rejecting may have an influence in the formation of diseases such as cancer. It has been suggested, on the basis of evidence such as the fantasy processes of cancer patients, that in some cases the disease represents a kind of congealing of a split-off negative emotional charge such as anger, grief, fear, or some other feeling that is

found incompatible with the dominant self-image. 4

The work of R. D. Laing on what he calls "the divided self" has clearly described the process of splitting off parts of oneself, or one's self-image, in psychosis. Such splitting may take the form of a *false self* versus a *true self*, or a *good self* versus a *bad self*. Laing cites examples of psychotic patients who experience themselves as machines or robots, or objects, or animals, or monsters something nonhuman or antihuman (Laing, 1969).

I would like to suggest the term *schizon* as an alternative for shadow in instances where we are dealing with an experience of

rejecting or excluding an aspect of our nature. The splitting-off of the schizon can be seen as a defensive reaction, similar in intent to projection of the shadow onto another person. We separate that part of ourselves because we find it unacceptable to the ego, to our conscious self-image. That part of our identity is sent into internal exile. The schizon, like the shadow, is perceived as a threat to the ego; it is feared, avoided, hated, or denied and ignored. 5

Beside projecting our unacceptable side onto others, another common way of dealing with it is to hide it in the unconscious recesses of the psyche, isolating it from awareness. Freud, who discovered this mechanism, called it repression in German, *Verdrängung*, literally "a pushing away." In the Basque culture, the word for this unacknowledged part of our nature that causes us to behave in violent and destructive ways is

*oshua*, which means "the hidden" (A. Arrien, personal communication). The well-known myth of King Minos, who had an elaborate labyrinth built in order to hide the monstrous, devouring Minotaur, gives expression to this theme. The folktale of Bluebeard, who murdered his spouses and kept their skeletons hidden in a closet, to which he forbade entry, is another metaphor for this process; this is the prototype of the well-known "skeleton-in-the-closet" motif.

We want to hide this unacceptable part, this schizon, from ourselves, but we are rarely able to hide it completely from others, because others do not necessarily have the same difficulty in seeing this aspect of our character. For example, if I have a self-image that does not allow me to express rage, then I will defensively hide every urge to express it openly. I will be unconscious of the feeling of rage, and of my (nonverbal) expression of it. Other people, however, are not likely to be invested in my image of myself as



being without rage, and they will perceive my feelings.

This situation is symbolized in the Old Testament story of Cain and Abel. After the murder of Abel, Cain complains that he now has to hide from the world. But he also wears the mark of the murderer. Hiding draws attention to itself. The Jewish *midrashim* tells us that after the murder of Abel, the eye of God, or in some versions, the voice of God, followed Cain all over the world. This is the eye, or voice of conscience, from which we cannot hide because it is the eye of the Self within. From the point of view of the little self, the

ego-personality, this is the guilty conscience, the vengeful or punitive super-ego.

The eye of God (of Self) sees everything that we are and do. But in relationship to others we want to hide the schizon, the antihuman behavior, because we cannot face it and we do not want others to see it. Traditionally, in religious mythology, the *face* of evil is unimaginable and is not to be perceived. This may well underlie the use of masks or disguises by practitioners of evil, such as Inquisitors, torturers, or the KKK. The "Star Wars" film epics, with mythic insight, show Darth Vader, the personification of evil, wearing a metallic, inhuman mask. The mask turns the perpetrators of evil into faceless nonpersons. They are not recognized, hidden in the shadows of darkness and concealment, just as our own unacceptable side is hidden in the unconsciousness of the *shadow*, or the psychic

exile of the *schizon*.

For the process of transformation, the symbolism of both *shadow* and *mask* underscores the importance of awareness and recognition. That which is hidden in the shadow or behind the mask, in the depths of our own psyche, must be seen and identified. I cannot integrate some aspect of myself unless and until I can recognize it for what it is. By recognizing and identifying evil, we neutralize its power, which is based on concealment and masking. This is as true of collective manifestations of evil as it is of the individual's intrapsychic process. If there had been more Germans able and willing to call attention to the genocidal death camps of the Nazis, that particular holocaust might not have gone as far as it did. The one thing that can stop state-endorsed torture and murder is to expose it to the eyes of the world: to document and call attention to it, as the work of the Amnesty International organization has demonstrated.

As a way of making this theme more concrete and personal, I offer the following exercise in self-awareness: Ask yourself what about yourself you most want to hide. What thought or impulse do you have that you least want anyone else to know about? Try accepting the possibility that you might do that, or be like that. To face the shadow, or the hidden evil side of our psyche, requires courage and inspires humility. It requires courage because the dark face is terrifying and destructive. It inspires humility because our self-image and self-esteem are definitely diminished by such a confrontation.

## From Denial To Affirmation

The question naturally arises as to why it is apparently so difficult for human beings to transform their negative complex, when all that is needed is to recognize it, identify it, and understand it. The reason for the difficulty is what Western psychology call unconsciousness, and Indian traditions call *avidya*, ignorance, not-knowing. These threatening elements of the psyche remain unconscious and unknown precisely because we deny that we have them. This points up the important role of denial and negation in the splitting off of these factors, and their repression into unconsciousness.

It was Sigmund Freud who first pointed out that repression, the pushing of something into the unconscious, involves a process that is an exact analogy to the linguistic function of negation. <sup>6</sup>

Denial and repression say "no" to the impulse, or thought, or wish that is being repressed or defended against. In the situation referred to earlier, where we see someone behaving in a way that we consciously regard as bad or evil, we are likely to think (and perhaps say), "I could never do that." In other words, the thought or impulse is denied. This created a kind of split-off area of consciousness referred to as the unconscious, to maintain that negation and denial. Repression and denial, repeated countless times in the process of growing up and living, create a system of inhibitions and prohibitions, defensive walls, that can end up being a kind of prison of the mind.

We all know the young child, the three- or four-year-old that we once were, and partly still are, who vehemently announces "No, I won't." This is normal resistance and negation, the ego exercising its power to set its own limits. In relation to spiritual development, the function of

negation and resistance is metaphorically associated with the devil. In Goethe's *Faust*, Mephistopheles introduces himself as "the spirit who always says 'no'" (*der Geist der stets verneint*). Psychologically, when we attempt, through denial, to impose our own ego-will on the ever-changing life process, we are, in a way, playing the same game as the devil.

This process, experienced mentally as negation, emotionally as rejection and exclusion, and perceptually as a hiding and concealing, is a stoppage, a blocking of life-energy flow. The sum of these blocks and holding patterns that hinder life-energy flow was symbolized by Wilhem Reich as the *armor* the character armor which is also

a muscular armor. According to Reich, the function of this armor is to defend the ego against unacceptable impulses, to block or negate the experience and the expression of these impulses.

The armor functions as a kind of prison from which we try to break out. Reich was impressed by the extent to which the armoring process leads to reactions of rage and violence, as the armored individual unconsciously tries to break through the defensive armoring. In this attempt there is an immense concentration of destructive rage, precisely the kind of behavior that we would traditionally attribute to the devil and regard as opposed to the life force. This is why Reich concluded that the armor was the source of man's diabolical violence. "I seriously believe that in the rigid, chronic armoring of the human animal, we have found the answer to the question of his



enormous destructive hatred . . . we have discovered the realm of the devil" (Reich, 1949).

Another perspective on the role of denial and negation in the conflict of good and evil tendencies can be obtained by considering the nature of lying. In European Christian theology and folklore, one of the devil's common modes of operating was to sow seeds of doubt, to question, to suggest that perhaps it was not so. In this way, the devil was the slanderer, undermining people's faith and belief in divine reality. Denying the existence and sovereignty of God and the saving efficacy of the Holy Ghost was regarded as the most serious, unpardonable sin, inspired of course by the devil, the "one who always denies." <sup>7</sup>

We typically experience the conflict between good and evil tendencies in our nature as a kind of struggle between yes and no. A part of us affirms life and another part of us denies it. Freud identified this struggle between yes and no

as the struggle between the sexual and aggressive impulses of the animal-like id and the rational, human ego. He argued that it was a necessary and inevitable consequence of civilized existence. The experience of doubt is another yes versus no situation: When we are in a state of doubt, we are "of two minds" about something. One part of us believes it, says yes to it; another part denies it, says no.

We can see that denial per se is not necessarily evil or destructive. If the impulse is *bad* or destructive, then denying it and inhibiting it may well be the path of the *good*. In the most basic terms, the word *no* sets a limit, it defines a situation. Any form or pattern has

a limit or boundary. That boundary says no to a further expansion of the process within that form. So the no is necessary to set a limit to the yes. In the struggle between them we experience the chronic split in our nature. And we also generate the energy for the process of transformation. 8

I recommend the following exercise in awareness: Observe what it is you often find yourself denying. What are you saying no to in yourself? The exercise becomes a transformative one if we then accept those things as part of our experience. To accept them does not mean we act out the baser impulses; rather, we accept the fact that we experience them and that they exist. We can say yes to the feeling or impulse while saying no, setting limits, to its expression where not appropriate. Thus both sides are acknowledged.

## Purification and Elimination

A variation on the theme of something in us being dark like a shadow, or being split off like a schizon, is the common image that something in our nature is covered with dirt, or polluted, or tainted, and needs to be purified. People who have a strong puritanical upbringing are particularly susceptible to this metaphor. In dreams, meditations, or psychedelic experiences, they may find themselves dealing with issues of defilement, pollution and the corruption of the flesh.

There are many examples of this particular metaphor in the New Testament. Insane or obsessed individuals were said to be inhabited by "unclean spirits." Jesus drove unclean spirits out of a man and into a herd of pigs. Our sins are compared to stains on the radiant, pure soul. The soul must be "washed in the blood of the lamb," to remove the stain of original sin. This metaphor for evil or sin is linked to ancient

purification taboos and practices.

There are basically two possible postures that we adopt in relationship to something that we find in ourselves or in others that we regard as polluted or impure: either we want to purify and cleanse it, or we want to excrete and eliminate it. I propose that the biological excretion of fecal waste may be the organic and experiential basis for the judgment of *bad* in the child. What is excreted is bad for the body, and young children, through instinct or learning, come to regard excrement as bad, worthless, to be eliminated. This may also

explain why children and adults, in moments of anger, refer to bad things or events as "shit."

In some individuals, and in some cultures, the judgment that something is bad and therefore to be eliminated becomes a judgment that it is evil and therefore to be feared and condemned. There exists a fairly widespread association of the functions and organs of excretion with evil and the devil that has never been satisfactorily explained.<sup>9</sup> The great reformer Martin Luther, for example, habitually referred to the devil as something black and filthy, and he uses homely German anal terminology (*bescheissen*, etc.) to describe his recommended attitude toward the devil.

In some Christian paintings of Hell or the Last Judgment, the devil, chief of the demons, is shown excreting sinners through his anus. In some branches of Hindu mythology, the origin of

evil is explained as emanating from certain parts of the body of the creator, Brahma, whether it be the penis, or most often, the anus. In one mythic cycle, human beings are seen as having been created as the excretions of Brahma. Some children believe that babies come from defecation.

According to his metaphor, then, something that is evil or bad is a blemish, pollution, or feces. It should be eliminated before it corrupts the organism or psyche in which it is found. This is essentially the peculiar rationale that underlay the Nazis' bizarre theories of racial purity. This grotesque and genocidal perversion should not cause us to overlook the valid principle that waste matter or toxins in any organism or system, if retained, become pathological and must therefore be eliminated for the preservation of health and normal functioning of that system.

The alternative to elimination of something putrid and rotten is purification. Purification and

elimination can be regarded as two principal means for dealing with corrupt elements in the psyche. As such, they are aspects of the general process of integrating the shadow and reconciling the opposites.

## From Inner Warfare to Inner Peace

In some of our experience, the duality of good and evil is felt as a defensive stand-off, a separation, a gulf, a rejection. We are unconscious of the shadow aspects, blind to our faults, we want to



separate from that in us which we feel is rotten. In other phases of our experience, there is a more active struggle or conflict going on. We may love and hate simultaneously, or feel both attraction and aversion toward the same object or person. We may be in turmoil as our fears and inhibitions struggle with impulses of lust or aggression. In meditative states, or dreams, or psychedelic visions, we may witness what seems like a clash of opposing tendencies in our psyche, like armies battling in the night.

The task of personal transformation is to turn this inner warfare to inner peace. We need to come to terms with "enemies," both inner and outer. The clashing opposites must be reconciled. Forces, tendencies, and impulses that are locked in seemingly endless conflict must learn to coexist. I used to believe one had to make friends with the inner enemy, the shadow self. I now feel

that making friends is perhaps not necessary, that this "other side" of our nature may always stay in opposition to our true nature. We may want to keep this figure, to function as what Castaneda's Don Juan calls a "worthy opponent," for warrior training. But we need to understand this enemy. Making friends with the inner enemy may be possible. Getting to know him or her is essential.

All spiritual tradition agree that the seeds of warfare, the violent, destructive forces are within us, as are the peaceful, harmonizing forces. A Hindu teacher, Swami Sivananda, writes, "the inward battle against the mind, the sense, the subconscious tendencies (*vasanas*), and the residues of prior experiences (*samskaras*), is more terrible than any outward battle" (Perry, 1971, p. 397). A text by one of the fathers of the Eastern Church, from the *Philokalia*, states, "there is a warfare where evil spirits secretly battle with the soul by means of thoughts. Since the soul is invisible, these malicious powers

attack and fight it invisibly" (Perry, 1971, p. 410). The good Christian, in order to be saved, is exhorted to battle temptations, to ward off demonic invaders and harmful external influences. A poem by the Persian Sufi Rumi states: "We have slain the outward enemy, but there remains within us a worse enemy than he. This *nafs* (animal self, or lower self) is hell, and hell is a dragon. . . ." (Perry, 1971, p. 397). I cite this imagery because it illustrates how widespread, across many religious traditions, is this symbolism of inner warfare.

As a psychologist, I have been investigating the many metaphors used to describe the transformation process in order to determine

their origin. <sup>10</sup> I pose the question: How does the feeling of being in a state of inner conflict arise in us in the first place? And I suggest partial answers to this question from three different perspectives: the personal/developmental, the evolutionary/historical, and the theological/mythical.

The *personal/developmental basis* for the experience of conflict may very well be (in part) the phenomenon of sibling rivalry in early childhood. Competition between brothers and sisters for the attention and approval of the parents and other adults is extremely common. This competitive attitude may be maintained into adulthood and carried over into personal and work relationships with peers. Alternatively, it may be internalized, so that one feels that there is an inferior and superior self-image competing and struggling with each other. The founder of

gestalt therapy, Fritz Perls, called this the conflict between top dog and underdog.

There are numerous myths about bitter and protracted competition between rival brothers, such as Cain and Abel, or Osiris and Seth, and stories about hostile sisters, such as Cinderella, or the daughters of King Lear, that illustrate this theme of sibling competition. From the perspective of the psychology of transformation, we interpret such stories as referring to an internal process. Both the good sibling and the wicked sibling are aspects of our own nature. In the words of the English Boehme disciple William Law, "You are under the power of no other enemy, are held in no other captivity, and want no other deliverance but from the power of your own earthly self. This is the murderer of the divine life within you. It is your own Cain that murders your own Abel."<sup>11</sup>

In addition to its childhood origin in sibling rivalry, this theme of inner conflict also has

probable *evolutionary* and *historical* antecedents the age-old, long-continuing struggles between tribes and societies for territory and economic survival. The cutthroat competition of the haves and the have-nots is a deeply ingrained factor in the consciousness of the human race. Whether humanity, as a species, can transform this territorial and economic competition into peaceful and cooperative coexistence is perhaps our most difficult challenge.

Going even further back into mammalian evolution, one could speculate about the possible residue in human genetic memory of the millions of years of competitive interaction between predators and prey. The ecologist Paul Shepard has argued that the predator

carnivores developed a different sort of consciousness, a different kind of attention from the prey herbivores, related to their different lives of hunting or escaping (Shepard, 1978). Predator intelligence is searching, aggressive, tuned to stalking and hunting. Prey intelligence is cautious, expectant, tranquil, but ready for instant flight. I suggest that these different styles of awareness, these opposing modes of relating, form a kind of substrate to the human experience of aggressors (predators) and victims (prey). Do we not still hunt, prey on and victimize our fellow humans for survival? Do we not still, in the paranoid mode, vigilantly watch for threats, prepared to flee or defend?

In the human imagination, the encounter with the shadow is often experienced as a confrontation with a dangerous beast. When the ideal-ego feels attacked by a monster who emerges out of the

unconscious, it feels like a victim.

Transformation involves realizing that this ideal-ego is also the beast, the aggressor, the predator. We are both the hunter and the hunted. When we realize this, then the two can make peace first within, and then in external relationships. In the final days, when planetary transformation is completed, according to ancient prophecies, "the lion and the lamb shall lie down together"; erstwhile victims and aggressors will coexist peacefully.

The third perspective on the origin of the inner conflict is *theological/mythical*. Many ancient mythologies offer a cosmic story of the world inherently split by discord and strife. Heraclitus said: "War (of opposites) is the father and king of all." In the Zoroastrian religion of ancient Persia, competition between the forces of light and darkness was given a most dramatic expression: Here we find the myth of the long-drawn struggle, and alternating rulership of the world



between Ahura-Mazda, the Light Creator, and Ahriman, the Prince of Darkness. This Zoroastrian conception of a fundamental cosmic dualism undoubtedly had a profound influence on both the Jewish and the Christian religions. The Manichaeans and Gnostics were particularly affected by this myth, with their strong emphasis on the fundamental duality of the Creator and the parallel duality of the created cosmos. <sup>12</sup>

In this complex of conflict and warfare, made up of personal, evolutionary, and mythological elements, we find the story of man's inhumanity to man: destructiveness, violence, cruelty, sadism, intentional injury, and violation of another's physical or psychological integrity. Recalling the earlier discussion of judgment, I offer the

following perspective on these manifestations of human evil: They represent a combination of judgmentalism with violent rage. The judgment is expressed and acted upon in a destructive and aggressive way. Those who are judged *bad*, or *evil*, or *opposite*, are attacked and destroyed.

To put it another way, the judgment that is rendered serves as a rationalization for the naked expression of rage. The rationalization may be literary or aesthetic, as with the Marquis de Sade; or it may be spuriously racial or genetic, as with Hitler's genocidal holocaust; or it may be religious, as with the torturers of the Inquisitionthe pattern is everywhere the same. The conflict of the judge-persecutor with the judged victim is perhaps the most vicious of all the warring opposites we know. This variant is also played out within the psyche: We are ourselves the punitive judge (in Freudian terms,

the superego) *and* the punished victim of persecution (psychologically, the guilt-ridden ego).

For transformation to take place, we need to learn to become wise, impartial judges of ourselves, not punitive, vindictive judges. And again, we must start by realizing that the opposing enemies, the clashing and competing forces, are all within both the judge and the accused, the jailor and the prisoner, the executioner and the condemned.

## On Facing One's Demons

In traditional and contemporary folk religions, demons are the relatives of the devil they are personifications of evil forces, of alien and destructive influences and impulses. They are definitely regarded as something outside of us, something not-self. In primitive or native cultures, living in a state of "participation mystique" with Nature, demons, like giants,

often represent the destructive, violent energies of hurricanes, storms, lightning, wildfires, avalanches, floods, earthquakes, or volcanic eruptions. By inventing or imagining living beings, whether spirits or demons, who guide these forces, their terrifying character is somehow made more tolerable.

Conversely, our own inner states may at times feel to us to be out of control, like the forces of Nature. We then find it natural to describe these inner states as analogous to these forceful aspects of Nature. We speak of someone as a "tempestuous character," or of

being in a "stormy mood," or "flooded with grief," or having a "volcanic explosion" of temper. Our inner life, like Nature around us, seems at times to be dominated by violent, clashing energies that seem alien and overwhelmingly powerful to us. This is one aspect of the experience of the demonic.

In the East, both Hindu and Buddhist mythology offers a somewhat different perspective on demons, or *asuras*, also known as "angry gods," or "titans." In many myths, the *asuras* are seen as playing a kind of counterpart role to the good gods, or *devas*. They are the opponents of the gods, analogous to a kind of cosmic Mafia, with values opposite to those of normal humans and gods. In the Buddhist *Wheel of Life*, which symbolically portrays six different types of lives one can be born into, the world of *asuras* is one of the six worlds, one possibility for existence.

Buddhists say these demons are dominated by feelings of pride, jealousy, and anger, and are engaged in perpetual competitive struggle and conflict.

From a psychological point of view, we are in this world of demons when we are dominated by feelings of pride, jealousy, anger, and competitive struggle. The mythic picture of the *asuras* is shown to us as a kind of reminder of how our feelings, our thoughts, and our intentions create the kind of reality in which we live. The chaotic, murderous existence of the demons and of humans dominated by demons, is an external consequence of an inner state. <sup>13</sup>

In Western culture, the concept of demon has an interesting history. For the Greeks and Romans, the "daimon" (Latin "genius") was not evil at all but was a protective spirit, a divine guardian, something like what later European folklore called the "guardian angel." Socrates was wont to say that he would converse with his *daimon* in

order to obtain guidance. It is only under the later influence of Christianity that the word demon came to connote something malevolent or destructive. As is well known, Christianity tended to turn old pagan gods such as Pan and Dionysus into devils or demons.<sup>14</sup>

Generally speaking, there appears to be a much greater tendency in the Western, Judaic-Christian tradition to polarize good and evil as absolute opposites. Only the three monotheistic religions have a concept of an evil deitythe devil or Satan, who opposes God and the spiritual aspirations of human beings. In the Asian traditions and in the Egyptian and Greek polytheistic religions, we more often find a pluralistic view that accepts a multitude of different perspectives

and states of being of various origins and values. And although there may be numerous harmful spirits, demons, and enemies, there is not one personification of all evil. There are gods of death Hades, Pluto, Yama, Marabut these are not like the devil or Satan.

The figure of Satan, at least in Western culture, has all the traits and qualities that are part of our shadow or unacceptable side. He is the liar, the slanderer, the destroyer, the deceiver, the tempter, the one who brings guilt and shame, the adversary, the unclean and dark one, who denies and negates everything that enlarges and enhances life, who opposes everything that we value and hold most sacred. <sup>15</sup>

In Jungian terms, the devil represents or embodies the collective shadow of the entire Western Judaic-Christian civilization. He is an amalgamated projection of the shadow image of



all the thousands and millions of individuals who have believed in him through the centuries. As with other projections, by attributing dark impulses and feelings to the devil, someone not-self, one is relieved of any responsibility for them as expressed in that most classic of all excuses, "the devil made me do it." Satan exists in the same sense that the ancient gods and goddesses exist and live in the psyches of individuals who express their qualities and characteristics, whether consciously or unconsciously. The legion of forms and names that the devil can take, the many variations on this theme of clashing opposites, are a tribute to the creative imagination of human beings.

This is the multifarious figure whose features can be detected somewhere behind the persona-mask of every man and woman. It is the beast that haunts every beauty, the monster that awaits every hero on his quest. But if we recognize, acknowledge, and come to terms with it, a great

deal of knowledge formerly hidden, unconscious, in the shadows, becomes conscious. When we recognize this devil as an aspect of ourselves, then the shadow functions as a teacher and initiator, showing us our unknown face, providing us with the greatest gift of allself-understanding. The conflict of opposites is resolved into a creative play of energies and limitations.

## Notes

1. Modern psychobiological research suggests that this kind of primitive emotional value judgment may be mediated by the mid-brain, or limbic

system, also known as the "mammalian brain," which controls emotional reactions of "fight or flight" in animals and humans. See Carl Sagan's *The Dragons of Eden* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1977) and Melvin Konner's *The Tangled Wing* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1982), for a discussion of the emotions and the limbic system in the brain.

2. C. G. Jung, "The Shadow," in *Aion* (Collected Works, Vol. 9, II, Bollingen Series XX. Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 9. Other significant discussions of the nature of evil, from a Jungian perspective, may be found in Edward Edinger's *Ego and Archetype* (New York: Penguin Books, 1972); and in *Archetypes*, by Anthony Stevens (New York: Quill, 1983). Two other books that have influenced my thinking on this subject are Ernest Becker, *Escape from Evil*

(New York: Free Press, 1976), and David Bakan, *The Duality of Human Existence* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966).

3. There are some hopeful signs that the divisiveness of this kind of delusional projection and paranoia is beginning to be understood and discussed. In early 1983, a conference was held in San Francisco, called "Faces of the Enemy," on the perceptions by Russians and Americans of each other. See *The Tarrytown Letter* (Tarrytown, NY, 10591), No. 38, April 1984; and *Evolutionary Blues* (Box 40187, San Francisco, CA 94140), especially the interview with Robert Fuller.

4. See a most interesting paper by Philip Lansky, M.D., "Possibility of Hypnosis as an Aid to Cancer Therapy," in *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, Vol. 23 (3), Spring, 1982. If this view is correct, it would help explain the otherwise mysterious processes of "remission" that sometimes occur, as well as the sometimes

healing effects of imagery processes in cancer, pioneered by Dr. Carl O. Simonton. Different individuals would have different capacities to accept the unacceptable parts of their nature, and this would affect healing and recovery.

5. What I am calling "schizon" here, to draw attention to the split-off character of this psychic fragment, is called by Jung, and Freud, a "complex." Jung writes, "We can take it as moderately certain that complexes are in fact 'splinter psyches.'" (C. G. Jung, "A Review of the Complex Theory," in *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche (Collected Works, Vol. 8, Bollingen Series XX, Princeton University Press, 1969)*, pp. 96-98.

6. In his paper "Negation," first published in 1925, Freud wrote that "a repressed image or thought can make its way into consciousness on condition that it is *denied*." S. Freud. *General Psychological Theory*, New York: Liveright Publishing Co., 1935., pp. 213-214.

7. The English word "devil" comes from the Latin *diabolus*, which in turn is derived from the Greek *diaballein*, to slander or lie, literally "to throw (*ballein*) across (*dia-*).\" In English folk-speech we have the interesting phrase "to put something over" on someone, meaning to lie or trick them which still reflects this etymological origin.

8. The Russian teacher G. I. Gurdjieff made a strong case for the notion that the conflict of opposites within human consciousness, the struggle between "yes" and "no," generates a kind of friction, and this friction

provides an energy necessary for "work on oneself." (P. D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Jovanovich, 1965), pp. 32-33.

9. Norman O. Brown devoted a major portion of his study of psychoanalysis and history *Life Against Death* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1959) to an exploration of the meanings and implications of anality. W. D. O'Flaherty, in *The Origins of Evil in Hindu Mythology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), discusses Indian myths that see humans as emitted from the anus of Brahma, the Creator. Stanislav Grof, in his *Realms of the Human Unconscious* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1976), has described excremental visions in LSD therapy that derive from memories of the birth experience. In his paper "Perinatal Origins of Wars, Totalitarianism, and Revolutions:

(*Journal of Psychohistory*, Vol 4., No. 3, Winter, 1977), Grof applies his LSD findings to the phenomena of the concentration camps. The folklorist Alan Dundes, in his book *Life is Like a Chicken Coop Ladder*, has examined and presented German folklore and literature for evidence of anality as a trait of the German national character, with significant implications for an understanding of the Nazi holocaust.

10. Ralph Metzner, *Opening to Inner Light* *The Transformation of Human Nature and Consciousness* (J. P. Tarcher, 1986). My analysis of transformation metaphors has benefited greatly from the philosophical work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (University of Chicago Press, 1980), who have made a strong case for the ubiquity of implicit metaphors in everyday speech and thought.

11. Quoted in A. K. Coomaraswamy, "Who is Satan and Where is Hell?" in *Selected Papers*



Satan and where is Hell?" in *Selected Papers*, Vol. 2., ed. Roger Lipsey, Bollingen Series LXXXIX, Princeton University Press, 1977.

12. See Mircea Eliade, *History of Religious Ideas*, Vol. I, (University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 302-333, for Zoroastrianism, and Vol. II, pp. 387-395, for Manichaeism.

13. The Buddhist *Wheel of Life*, which plays a particularly important role in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, shows a circle divided into six sections, or "worlds." (Francesca Freemantle & Chögyam Trungpa, trans., *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Boulder, CO: Shambhala, 1975). These worlds may be regarded as symbolizing (1) different incarnations or lifetimes of human beings, or (2) different personality types, or (3) different states of consciousness that anyone could find themselves in.

14. A. K. Coomaraswamy, in *Selected Papers*, Vol. 2 (See note 11), writes "*Agathos* and *Kakos* daimons, fair and foul selves, Christ and Anti-

Christ, both inhabit us, and their opposition is within us. Heaven and Hell are the divided images of Love and Wrath *in divinis*, one in God, and it remains for every man to put them together again within himself." An excellent discussion of the concept of *daimon* in classical antiquity, and how this may be understood in terms of depth psychology is in M.-L. von Franz's *Projection and Re-collection in Jungian Psychology: Reflections of the Soul*. (La Salle, IL., Open Court, 1980).

15. The history and meaning of the figure of the devil has inspired numerous studies, of which I mention the following two books by Jeffrey B. Russel: *The Devil Perceptions of Evil From Antiquity to Primitive Christianity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977); and *Satan The Early Christian Tradition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981). A doctoral dissertation with interesting findings was written by Eliot Isenberg, "The Experience of Evil A Phenomenological Study." (California Institute of Integral Studies, 1983).

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## Chapter Five

### Modern Consciousness Research and Human Survival

*Stanislav Grof, M.D., Ph.D.*

One of the most significant implications of modern consciousness research for psychiatry and psychotherapy has been an entirely new status and image of the human psyche.

Mechanistic science has portrayed consciousness as an epiphenomenon and product of highly developed matterthe brain. The traditional model of the human psyche that dominates academic psychiatry is personalistic and biographically oriented. It describes the newborn as a tabula rasa (an erased tablet or clean slate) and puts exclusive emphasis on postnatal biographical influences on the individual.

The observations of the last few decades have drastically changed our understanding of the relationship between consciousness and matter and of the dimensions of the psyche. They show consciousness as an equal partner of matter, or possibly even supraordinated to matter, and creative intelligence as inextricably woven into the fabric of the universe. In the light of these new discoveries, the human psyche appears to be essentially commensurate with all of existence. The modern scientific world-view is thus rapidly converging with that of the great mystical traditions of all ages (Huxley, 1944).

I will describe here this new image of reality and of human nature in the light of more than three decades of research of nonordinary states of consciousness that I have conducted in Prague, Czechoslovakia, and in the United States. Although I will focus primarily on the data from my own research, the conclusions are directly applicable to other fields studying human beings

that have accumulated observations incompatible with the mechanistic world-view, such as

Jungian psychology, anthropology, laboratory consciousness studies, and thanatology (Grof, 1983, 1985; Ring, 1980, 1984).

The observations and data to which I will refer came from two major sources approximately two decades of psychedelic research with LSD and other psychoactive substances and ten years of work with various experiential nondrug techniques. Since the issues related to psychedelic drugs belong to the most controversial topics in the world and are associated with many misconceptions, I must emphasize that this work, both in Europe and in the United States, was government-sponsored and medically supervised research conducted in the Psychiatric Research Institute in Prague, Czechoslovakia, and in the Maryland Psychiatric Research Center in Baltimore, Md., respectively. Its various aspects have been described in several



other publications (Grof, 1976, 1980; Grof & Grof, 1980).

Participants in the psychedelic research programs covered a very wide range, from normal volunteers, through various categories of psychiatric patients, to individuals dying of cancer. The nonpatient population consisted of clinical psychiatrists and psychologists, scientists, artists, philosophers, theologians, students, and psychiatric nurses. The patients with emotional disorders belonged to various diagnostic categories; they included psychoneurotics, alcoholics, narcotic drug addicts, sexual deviants, persons with psychosomatic disorders, borderline cases, and schizophrenics. In the cancer study that included over 150 patients with advanced forms of malignancy, the objective was not treatment of cancer, but relief from emotional and physical pain and change of the attitude toward death through deep mystical experiences induced by

psychedelics (Grof & Grof, 1980).

The data are based on more than 4,000 psychedelic sessions that I have conducted personally, and from records of over 2,000 sessions run by my colleagues in Czechoslovakia and in the United States. The two different approaches that were used in this work are called the psycholytic and the psychedelic therapeutic techniques; they differ in their treatment strategies and in their underlying philosophies (Grof, 1980).

The original motive for the use of LSD and other psychedelic drugs was to explore their potential to intensify, deepen, and accelerate the therapeutic process in Freudian analysis. However, when I started using LSD as a therapeutic tool, it became obvious that not only the practice of psychoanalysis but also its theory had to be

drastically revised. Without any programming, and against my will, patients were transcending the biographical domain and exploring areas of the psyche uncharted by psychoanalysis and academic psychiatry. Moreover, major therapeutic changes did not occur in the context of the work on childhood traumas that are so much emphasized in psychoanalysis, but followed powerful transbiographical experiences that mainstream psychiatry sees as symptoms of mental illness and tries to suppress by all means.

Since this research involved a powerful mind-altering drug, it is quite natural to question to what extent it is legitimate to use it as a source of data for a psychological theory. There has been a tendency among professionals to see the LSD state as a "toxic psychosis" and the experiences induced by the drug as a chemical fantasmagoria that has very little to do with how

the mind functions under more ordinary circumstances. However, systematic clinical research with LSD and related psychedelics has shown that these drugs can best be understood as unspecific amplifiers of mental processes. They do not create the experiences they induce, but activate the deep unconscious and make its contents available for conscious processing. The observations from psychedelic sessions have, therefore, general validity for the understanding of the human psyche.

I have been able to confirm this during the last decade during which my wife Christina and I developed a nondrug experiential technique that we call holotropic therapy (Grof, 1987). It combines controlled breathing, evocative music, and focused body work. In systematic work with this approach, we have been seeing the entire spectrum of experiences characteristic of psychedelic sessions. When the phenomena described in this article can be triggered by

something as physiological as hyperventilation, there can be no doubt that they reflect genuine properties of the psyche.

In the experiential work with and without psychedelics, it soon became obvious that the traditional biographical model used in psychoanalysis was superficial and inadequate to describe the broad spectrum of important experiences that became available through these techniques. It was necessary to create a new model of the psyche that would be much more extensive than the one generally accepted in academic psychiatry. In addition to the biographical-recollective level, the new cartography includes the perinatal realm

of the psyche focusing on the phenomena of birth and death, and the transpersonal domain.

The experiences of all the above categoriesbiographical, perinatal, and transpersonalare quite readily available to most people. They can be observed in sessions with psychedelic drugs, various forms of experiential psychotherapy using breathing, music, dance, and body work, and quite regularly in dreams.

Laboratory mind-altering techniques such as biofeedback, sleep deprivation, sensory isolation or sensory overload, and various kinesthetic devices (the "witches' cradle," or the rotating couch) can also induce many of these phenomena (Grof, 1983).

There exists a wide spectrum of ancient and Oriental spiritual practices that are specifically designed to facilitate access to the perinatal and transpersonal domains. For this reason, it is not

accidental that the new model of the psyche shows great similarity to those developed over centuries or even millennia by various great mystical traditions.

The entire experiential spectrum has also been described by historians, anthropologists, and students of comparative religion in the context of various shamanistic procedures, aboriginal rites of passage and healing ceremonies, death-rebirth mysteries, and trance dancing in ecstatic religions. Recent consciousness research has thus made it possible for the first time to seriously review ancient and non-Western knowledge about consciousness and to aim for a genuine synthesis of age-old wisdom and modern science.

## The Recollective-Biographical Level of the Psyche

For the majority of people, the domain of the psyche that is most readily available in deep experiential therapy is usually the recollective-

biographical level and the individual unconscious. Although the phenomena belonging to this category are of considerable theoretical and practical relevance, it is not necessary to spend much time on their description. Most of the traditional psychotherapeutic approaches have already explored this level of the psyche. There exists abundant professional literature discussing nuances of psychodynamics in the biographical realm.

The experiences belonging to this category are related to significant biographical events and circumstances of the life of the individual



from birth to the present. On this level of self-exploration, anything from the life of the person involved that is an unresolved conflict, a repressed memory that has not been integrated, or an incomplete psychological gestalt of some kind, can emerge from the unconscious and become the content of the experience.

## Encounter with Birth and Death: Dynamics of Basic Perinatal Matrices

As the process of experiential self-exploration deepens, the elements of emotional and physical pain can reach extraordinary intensity. They can become so extreme that the person involved feels that he or she has transcended the boundaries of individual suffering and is experiencing the pain of entire groups of unfortunate people, all of humanity, or even all of life. It is not uncommon that people whose inner processes reach this

domain report experiential identification with wounded or dying soldiers of all ages, prisoners in dungeons and concentration camps, persecuted Jews or early Christians, mothers and children in childbirth, or even animals who are attacked by predators or tortured and slaughtered. This level of the human unconscious thus clearly represents an intersection between biographical experiences and the spectrum of phenomena of a transpersonal nature.

Experiences on this level of the unconscious are typically accompanied by dramatic physiological manifestations, such as various degrees of suffocation, accelerated pulse rate, palpitations, nausea and vomiting, changes in the color of the complexion, oscillation of body temperature, spontaneous occurrence of skin eruptions and bruises, or tremors, twitches, contortions, twisting movements and other striking motor manifestations. In psychedelic sessions and occasionally in nondrug experiential sessions or

in spontaneously occurring states of mind, these phenomena can be so authentic and convincing that the person involved can believe that he or she is actually dying. Even an inexperienced sitter or witness of such episodes can perceive them as serious vital emergencies.

On the biographical level, only persons who actually have had a serious brush with death would be dealing with the issue of survival or impermanence. In contrast, when the inner process transcends biography, the problems related to suffering and death can entirely

dominate the picture. Those individuals whose postnatal life history did not involve a serious threat to survival or body integrity can enter this experiential domain directly. In others, the reliving of serious physical traumas, diseases, or operations, functions as an experiential bridge to this realm. This is particularly true for such biographical situations or events that involve interference with breathing. Thus, reliving of childhood pneumonia, diphtheria, whooping cough, or near drowning can deepen into the reliving of the suffocation experienced at birth.

A profound confrontation with death characteristic of these experiential sequences tends to be intimately interwoven with a variety of phenomena that are clearly related to the process of biological birth. While facing agony and dying, individuals simultaneously experience themselves as struggling to be born and/or

delivering. In addition, many of the physiological and behavioral concomitants of these experiences can be naturally explained as derivatives of the birth process. It is quite common in this context to identify with a fetus and relive various aspects of one's biological birth with quite specific and verifiable details. The element of death can be represented by simultaneous or alternating identification with sick, aging, or dying individuals. Although the entire spectrum of these experiences cannot be reduced just to reliving biological birth, the birth trauma seems to represent an important core of the experiential process on this level. For this reason, I refer to this domain of the unconscious as perinatal.

The term perinatal is a Greek-Latin composite word in which the prefix peri- means around or near and the root -natis denotes relation to birth. It is commonly used in medicine to describe processes that immediately precede childbirth, are associated with it, or immediately

follow it; medical texts thus talk about perinatal hemorrhage, infection, or brain damage. In contrast to the traditional use of this word in obstetrics, I am applying the term perinatal to experiences. Perinatal experiences occur in typical clusters whose basic characteristics are related through deep experiential logic to anatomical, physiological, and biochemical aspects of those clinical stages of birth with which they are associated.

In spite of its close connection to childbirth, the perinatal process transcends biology and has important psychological, philosophical, and spiritual dimensions. It would be an oversimplification to interpret

it in a mechanistic and reductionistic fashion. Certain important characteristics of perinatal experiences clearly suggest that they are much broader phenomena than simply the reliving of biological birth. Experiences related to the death-rebirth process have important transpersonal dimensions and are conducive to profound change in the individual's philosophical and spiritual belief system, basic hierarchy of values, and general life strategy.

Deep experiential encounter with birth and death is typically associated with an existential crisis of extraordinary proportions during which the individual seriously questions the meaning of his or her life and existence in general. This crisis can be successfully resolved only by connecting with the intrinsic spiritual dimensions of the psyche and deep resources of the collective unconscious. The resulting personality

transformation and consciousness evolution can be compared to the changes that have been described in the context of ancient death-rebirth mysteries, initiation to secret societies, and various aboriginal rites of passage. The perinatal level of the unconscious thus represents an important interface between the individual and the collective unconscious or between traditional psychology and mysticism.

The experiences of death and rebirth that reflect the perinatal level of the unconscious are very rich and complex. Sequences related to various stages and facets of biological birth are typically intertwined or associated with a variety of transpersonal experiences of a mythological, mystical, archetypal, historical, sociopolitical, anthropological, or phylogenetic nature. These tend to appear in four characteristic experiential patterns or constellations. There seems to exist a deep connection between these thematic clusters and the clinical stages of childbirth.



Connecting with the experiences of the fetus in various stages of the biological birth process functions as a selective stencil which provides experiential access to specific domains of the collective unconscious that involve similar states of consciousness. It has proved very useful for the theory and practice of deep experiential work to postulate the existence of four hypothetical dynamic matrices governing the processes related to the perinatal level of the unconscious and to refer to them as Basic Perinatal Matrices (BPM).

## First Perinatal Matrix (BPM I): The Amniotic Universe

This important experiential matrix is related to the primal union with the maternal organism to the original state of intrauterine existence during which the mother and child form a symbiotic unity. If no noxious stimuli interfere, the conditions for the child can be close to optimal, involving security and continuous satisfaction of all needs. The basic characteristics of this experience are transcendence of the subject-object dichotomy, strong positive affect (peace, serenity, tranquillity, and oceanic ecstasy), feelings of sacredness, transcendence of space and time, and richness of insights of cosmic relevance.

The specific content of these experiences can be drawn from situations that share with it lack of

boundaries and obstructions, such as identification with the ocean and aquatic life forms or with interstellar space. Images of nature at its best (Mother Nature) and archetypal visions of heavens and paradises also belong to this category. It is important to emphasize that only episodes of undisturbed embryonal life are accompanied by experiences of this kind. Disturbances of intrauterine existence are associated with overwhelming fear, paranoia, and images of underwater dangers, pollution, inhospitable nature, and insidious demons from various cultures.

## Second Perinatal Matrix (BPM II.): The Experience of Cosmic Engulfment and Hell

This experiential pattern is related to the very onset of delivery and its first clinical stage. Initially, the intrauterine existence of the fetus is disturbed by alarming chemical signals and later by mechanical contractions of the uterus. The

fetus is periodically constricted by uterine spasms, while the cervix is still closed and does not allow passage.

Reliving of the very onset of biological birth is experienced as imminent vital danger and threat of enormous proportionscosmic engulfment. Overwhelming feelings of free-floating anxiety lead to paranoid ideation and perception. Intensification of this state typically results in the experience of a terrifying vortex or whirlpool sucking the subject and his or her world relentlessly to its center. Frequent experiential variations of this theme are those of being swallowed by an archetypal beast, entangled by a monstrous octopus or python,

or ensnared by a gigantic mother spider. A less dramatic form of the same experience is the theme of descent into the underworld and encounter with demonic creatures.

When reliving the first clinical stage of delivery in a fully developed form, the individual faces a situation that can best be described as no exit or hell. He or she feels stuck, encaged and trapped in a claustrophobic nightmarish world, and completely loses connection with linear time. The situation feels absolutely unbearable, endless and hopeless. It seems, therefore, quite logical that these individuals frequently identify experientially with prisoners in dungeons or concentration camps, victims of the Inquisition, inmates in insane asylums, or with sinners in hell and archetypal figures representing eternal damnation. During the deep existential crisis that typically accompanies this state, existence

appears as a meaningless farce or theater of the absurd.

### Third Perinatal Matrix (BPM III.): The Experience of Death-Rebirth Struggle

Many important aspects of this experiential matrix can be understood from its association with the second clinical stage of childbirth. In this stage, the uterine contractions continue, but the cervix is now dilated and allows a gradual propulsion of the fetus through the birth canal. This involves enormous struggle for survival, crushing mechanical pressures, and often high degrees of anoxia and suffocation. In the terminal phases of the delivery, the fetus can experience intimate contact with biological material such as blood, mucus, urine, and feces.

From the experiential point of view, this pattern is rather rich and ramified. Beside actual realistic reliving of various aspects of the struggle in the birth canal, it involves a wide variety of

phenomena that occur in typical thematic sequences, and is related with deep experiential logic to anatomical, physiological, and biochemical aspects of the birth process. The most important of these aspects is a sense of being involved in a fight of titanic proportions, sadomasochistic experiences, intense sexual arousal, demonic episodes, scatological involvement, and encounter with fire all occurring in the context of a determined death-rebirth struggle.

The specific images involve mythological battles of enormous proportions involving angels and demons or gods and Titans, raging elements of nature, sequences from bloody revolutions and wars, images involving pornography and deviant sexuality, violence, satanic orgies and Sabbath of the Witches, crucifixion and ritual sacrifice.

#### Fourth Perinatal Matrix (BPM IV.): The Death-Rebirth Experience

This perinatal matrix is meaningfully related to the third clinical stage of delivery to the actual birth of the child. In this final stage, the agonizing process of the birth struggle comes to an end; the propulsion through the birth canal culminates and the extreme buildup of pain, tension, and sexual arousal is followed by sudden relief and relaxation. After the umbilical cord is cut, the physical separation from the mother is complete and the child begins its new existence as an anatomically independent individual. As in the case of the other matrices, some of the experiences belonging here represent an accurate replay of the actual biological



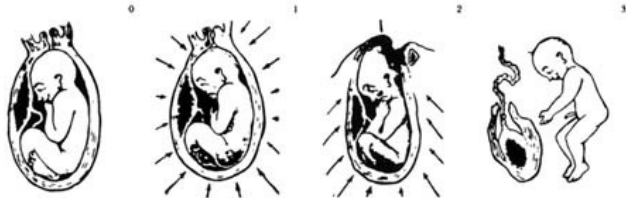
events involved in birth, as well as specific obstetric interventions. The symbolic counterpart of the final stage of delivery is the death-rebirth experience.

Paradoxically, while only one step from a phenomenal liberation, the individual has the feeling of impending catastrophe of enormous proportions. This frequently results in a determined struggle to stop

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STAGES OF DELIVERY

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the experience. If allowed to proceed, this experience involves a sense of annihilation on all imaginable levels physical destruction, emotional debacle, intellectual defeat, ultimate moral failure, and absolute damnation of enormous proportions. This experience of "ego death" seems to entail an instant merciless destruction of all previous reference points in the life of the individual.

The experience of total annihilation and "hitting the cosmic bottom" is immediately followed by visions of blinding white or golden light of supernatural radiance and beauty. It can be associated with astonishing displays of divine archetypal entities, rainbow spectra, or intricate peacock designs. The individual experiences a deep sense of emotional and spiritual liberation, redemption and salvation. He or she typically feels freed from anxiety, depression, and guilt,

purged and unburdened. This is associated with a flood of positive emotions toward oneself, other people, and existence in general. The world appears to be a beautiful and safe place and the zest for life is distinctly increased.

The concept of perinatal matrices makes it possible to relate a variety of psychopathological syndromes quite naturally to the anatomical, physiological, and biochemical aspects of the consecutive stages of biological birth. It also reveals new powerful mechanisms of healing and personality transformation that are not available in traditional psychiatry and psychotherapy. These interesting implications of the new model have been discussed in detail in another context (Grof, 1985).

## Beyond The Brain: Transpersonal Dimensions of The Psyche

Experiential sequences of death and rebirth typically open the gate to a transbiographical

domain in the human psyche that can best be referred to as transpersonal. The perinatal level of the unconscious clearly represents an interface between the biographical and the transpersonal realms, or the individual and the collective unconscious. In most instances, transpersonal experiences are preceded by a dramatic encounter with birth and death. However, there exists also an important alternative; occasionally, it is possible to access experientially various transpersonal elements and themes directly, without confronting the perinatal level. The common denominator of this

rich and ramified group of transpersonal phenomena is a feeling that consciousness has expanded beyond the usual ego boundaries and has transcended the limitations of time and space.

In ordinary states of consciousness, we experience ourselves as existing within the boundaries of the physical body (the body image) and our perception of the environment is restricted by the physically and physiologically determined range of our sensory organs. Both our internal perception (interoception) and external perception (exteroception) are confined by the usual spatial and temporal boundaries. Under ordinary circumstances, we can experience vividly and with all our senses only the events in the present moment and in our immediate environment. We can recall the past and anticipate future events or fantasize about them; however, the past and the future are not available

for direct experience.

In transpersonal experiences, as they occur in psychedelic sessions, self-exploration through nondrug experiential techniques or spontaneously, one or more of the usual limitations appear to be transcended. Experiences of this kind can be divided into three large categories. Some of them involve transcendence of linear time and are interpreted as historical regression and exploration of the biological, cultural, and spiritual past, or as historical progression into the future. In the second category, experiences are characterized primarily by transcendence of the ordinary spatial boundaries rather than temporal barriers. The third group is characterized by experiential exploration of domains that in Western culture are not considered part of objective reality.

In nonordinary states of consciousness, many people experience very concrete and realistic episodes which they identify as fetal and

embryonal memories. It is not unusual under these circumstances to experience (on the level of cellular consciousness) full identification with the sperm and the ovum at the time of conception. Sometimes historical regression goes even further and the individual has a convinced feeling of reliving memories from the lives of his or her ancestors, or even drawing on the memory banks of the racial or collective unconscious. On occasion, individuals report experiences in which they identify with various animal ancestors in the evolutionary pedigree, or have a distinct sense of reliving dramatic episodes from a previous incarnation.

Transpersonal experiences that involve transcendence of spatial barriers suggest that boundaries between the individual and the rest of the universe are not fixed and absolute. Under special circumstances it is possible to identify experientially with anything in the universe, including the entire cosmos itself. Here belong the experiences of merging with another person into a state of dual unity or assuming another person's identity, of tuning into the consciousness of a specific group of people, or of expansion of one's consciousness to such an extent that it seems to encompass all of humanity. In a similar way, one can transcend the limits of the specifically human experience and identify with the consciousness of animals, plants, or even inorganic objects and processes. It is even possible to experience consciousness of the entire biosphere, of our planet, or of the entire material universe.



In a large group of transpersonal experiences, the extension of consciousness seems to go beyond the phenomenal world and the time-space continuum as we perceive it in our everyday life. Here belong numerous visions of archetypal personages and themes, encounters with deities and demons of various cultures, and complex mythological sequences. Additional examples are reports of appearances of spirits of deceased people, suprahuman entities, and inhabitants of other universes. Among the most interesting experiences in this category are visions of abstract archetypal patterns and universal symbols (cross, ankh, yin-yang, swastika, pentacle, or six-pointed star), which are often associated with deep insights into their meaning.

Many people have also described experiences of the energies of the subtle body known from mystical and occult literature the flow of chi energy through the meridians as they are depicted in ancient Chinese medicine, arousal of the

Serpent Power (Kundalini), activation of various centers of psychic energy or chakras, and visions of colorful auras. In its furthest reaches, individual consciousness can identify with cosmic consciousness or with the Universal Mind. The ultimate of all experiences appears to be identification with the Supracosmic and Metacosmic Void, the mysterious primordial emptiness and nothingness that is conscious of itself and contains all existence in a germinal and potential form.

Transpersonal experiences have many strange characteristics that shatter the most fundamental assumptions of materialistic science

and of the mechanistic world-view. Researchers who have seriously studied and/or experienced these fascinating phenomena realize that the attempts of traditional psychiatry to dismiss them as irrelevant products of imagination or as erratic fantasmagoria generated by pathological processes in the brain, are superficial and inadequate. Any unbiased study of the transpersonal domain of the psyche has to come to the conclusion that these observations represent a critical challenge for the Newtonian-Cartesian paradigm of Western science.

Although transpersonal experiences occur in the process of deep individual self-exploration, it is not possible to interpret them simply as intrapsychic phenomena in the conventional sense. On the one hand, they form an uninterrupted experiential continuum with biographical-recollective and perinatal

experiences. On the other hand, they seem to be tapping directly, without the mediation of the sensory organs, sources of information that are clearly outside of the conventionally defined range of the individual.

The reports of people who have experienced episodes of embryonal existence, the moment of conception, and elements of cellular, tissue, and organ consciousness abound in medically accurate insights into the anatomical, physiological, and biochemical aspects of the processes involved. Similarly, ancestral experiences, racial and collective memories in the Jungian sense, and the past incarnation memories, frequently bring quite specific details about architecture, costumes, weapons, art, social structure, and religious practices of the culture and period involved, or even concrete historical events.

People who experience phylogenetic sequences or identification with existing life forms not only

find them unusually convincing and authentic but also acquire extraordinary insights concerning animal psychology, ethology, specific habits, or unusual reproductive cycles. In some instances, these experiences are accompanied by archaic muscular innervations not characteristic of humans, or even by such complex performances as enactment of a courtship dance.

Individuals who experience episodes of conscious identification with plants or parts of plants occasionally report remarkable insights into such botanical processes as germination of seeds, photosynthesis in the leaves, the role of auxins in plant growth, exchange of water and minerals in the root system, or pollination. Equally common is a convinced sense of conscious identification with inanimate matter or inorganic processes—the water in the ocean, fire, lightning, vol-

canic activity, tornado, gold, diamond, granite, and even stars, galaxies, atoms, and molecules.

There exists another interesting group of transpersonal phenomena that can be frequently validated and even researched experimentally. Here belong telepathy, psychic diagnosis, clairvoyance, clairaudence, precognition, psychometry, out-of-the-body experiences, traveling clairvoyance, and other instances of extrasensory perception. This is the only group of transpersonal phenomena that has been occasionally discussed in the past in academic circles, unfortunately with a strong negative bias.

From a broader perspective, there is no reason to sort out the so-called paranormal phenomena as a special category. Since many other types of transpersonal experiences quite typically involve access to new information about the universe through extrasensory channels, clear boundary

between psychology and parapsychology disappears, or becomes rather arbitrary when the existence of the transpersonal domain is recognized and acknowledged.

The philosophical challenge associated with the observations described here formidable as it may be in itself is further augmented by the fact that, in nonordinary states of consciousness, transpersonal experiences that correctly reflect the material world appear on the same continuum and are intimately interwoven with others whose content, according to the Western world-view, is not part of objective reality. In this context we can mention the Jungian archetypes the world of deities, demons, demigods, superheroes, and complex mythological, legendary, and fairytale sequences. These experiences can even impart accurate new information about religious symbolism, folklore, and mythical structures of various cultures about which the person previously had no knowledge.

The ability of transpersonal experiences to convey instant intuitive information about any aspect of the universe in the present, past, and future, violates some of the most basic assumptions of mechanistic science. They imply such seemingly absurd notions as relativity and the arbitrary nature of all physical boundaries, nonlocal connections in the universe, communication through unknown means and channels, memory without a material substrate, nonlinearity of time or consciousness associated with all living organisms (including lower animals, plants, unicellular organisms and viruses), and even inorganic matter.



Many transpersonal experiences involve events from the microcosm and macrocosm realms that cannot be directly reached by human senses or from periods that historically precede the origin of the solar system, formation of planet earth, appearance of living organisms, development of the central nervous system, and appearance of *Homo sapiens*. This clearly implies that in a yet unexplained way each human being contains the information about the entire universe or all of existence, has potential experiential access to all its parts, and in a sense is the whole cosmic network, as much as he or she is just an infinitesimal part of it, a separate and insignificant biological entity.

Transpersonal experiences have a very special position in the cartography of the human psyche. The recollective-analytical level and the individual unconscious are clearly biographical

in nature. The perinatal dynamic seems to represent an intersection or frontier between the personal and transpersonal. This is reflected in its deep association with birth and death, the beginning and end of individual human existence. Transpersonal phenomena reveal connections between the individual and the cosmos that are at present beyond comprehension. All we can say is that somewhere in the process of confrontation with the perinatal level of the psyche, a strange qualitative Möbius-like shift seems to occur in which deep self-exploration of the individual unconscious turns into a process of experiential adventures in the universe-at-large, which involves what can best be described as cosmic consciousness or the superconscious mind.

As Ken Wilber has demonstrated in his writings (Wilber, 1980, 1983), introducing transpersonal experiences into psychology creates a conceptual bridge between Western science and perennial philosophy. It also throws new light on many

problems in history, anthropology, sociology, psychology, psychiatry, philosophy, and comparative religion.

While the nature of transpersonal experience is clearly fundamentally incompatible with mechanistic science, it can be integrated with the revolutionary developments in various scientific disciplines that have been referred to as the emerging paradigm. Among the disciplines and concepts that have significantly contributed to this drastic change in the scientific worldview are quantum-relativistic physics (Capra, 1975, 1982), astrophysics (Davies, 1983), cybernetics, information and systems theory (Bateson, 1972, 1979), Sheldrake's theory

of morphic resonance (Sheldrake, 1981), Prigogine's study of dissipative structures and order by fluctuation (Prigogine, 1980) David Bohm's theory of holomovement (Bohm, 1980), Karl Pribram's holographic model of the brain (Pietsch, 1981; Pribram, 1971), and Arthur Young's theory of process (Young, 1976).

The expanded cartography described here is of critical importance for any serious approach to such phenomena as psychedelic states, shamanism, religion, mysticism, rites of passage, mythology, parapsychology, thanatology, and psychosis. This is not just a matter of academic interest; as I have mentioned earlier, it has deep and revolutionary implications for the understanding of psychopathology and offers new therapeutic possibilities undreamt of by traditional psychiatry.

This general description of the new cartography

of the human psyche that has emerged from the study of nonordinary states of consciousness leads us to an exploration of its implications for the current global crisis.

## Psychological Roots of the Current Global Crisis

The observations from modern consciousness research clearly indicate that a psychological approach limited to analysis of biographical factors, such as childhood history, psychosexual traumas, and dynamics of interpersonal relations, is not sufficient for understanding the motivation of human behavior. The biographical events do not represent the primal causes but are conditions for the emergence of deeper forces of a perinatal and transpersonal nature.

The perinatal level of the unconscious and the dynamics of the death-rebirth process represent a repository of difficult emotions and sensations. They function as an important source of various

forms of psychopathology and of powerful impulses and motivations of an irrational nature. An individual who is under a strong influence of the negative perinatal matrices approaches life in a way that is not only unfulfilling but also, in the long run, destructive and self-destructive.

People who gain experiential access to the perinatal level of the unconscious typically report that this domain is responsible for what can be called a "rat race" or "treadmill" existence. The perinatal forces tend to introduce into human life an unrelenting drive toward

linear pursuit of future goals and insatiable hunger for power, status, fame, and possessions. This is typically associated with an inability to really enjoy the fruits of these pursuits and with general dissatisfaction with oneself and one's life. In this context, it is not uncommon that the individual responds to a triumphant accomplishment by depression. This is what Joseph Campbell has described as "getting to the top of the ladder and finding that it was against the wrong wall."

The life experience of a person dominated by perinatal forces is influenced by the memory of the trauma of birth to such an extent that his or her emotions in everyday situations reflect the confinement in the birth canal more than they do the current circumstances. Because of that, the individual never experiences the present moment and the present situation as fully satisfying. Like

the fetus who is trying to escape from the clutches of the birth canal into a more comfortable situation, such a person will always expect satisfaction from the achievement of some future goals. Since these goals are, in the last analysis, surrogates for the psychological completion of birth, reaching them never brings the expected satisfaction.

An individual who lives under the spell of the perinatal domain of the unconscious sees existence from the narrow perspective of myself, my family, my religion, my country. From this point of view, other people, groups, and nations are perceived as competitors, the world as a potential threat, and nature as something that has to be conquered and controlled. Although there exist considerable variations in the degree to which this attitude manifests itself in different individuals, this pattern is certainly sufficiently characteristic that most of us recognize it.

On the collective and global scale, this frame of



mind generates a philosophy of life that emphasizes strength, competition, and self-assertion, and glorifies linear progress and unlimited growth ("the bigger, the better"). It considers material profit and the increase of the gross national product to be the main criteria of well-being and measures of the living standard. This ideology and the resulting strategies bring humans into a serious conflict with their nature as biological systems and into dissonance with basic universal laws.

Biological organisms depend critically on optimum values: More vitamins, more hormones, more calcium, or more water is not necessarily better than fewer vitamins, fewer hormones, less calcium,

and less water. Similarly, higher temperature or blood level of sugar is not better than lower temperature or blood level of sugar. If the largest body size and weight were the goal of evolution, the dinosaurs would still be around and would be the dominant species.

The strategy imposed on the individual by perinatal dynamics is thus unnatural and dangerous. In a universe the nature of which is cyclical, it enforces linearity and the pursuit of unlimited growth. In addition, the resulting approach to existence disregards the ecological imperative and does not recognize the urgent and absolutely vital need for synergy, complementarity, and cooperation.

Moreover, analysis of the experiences and imagery of people who connect with the perinatal level in the context of the death-rebirth process suggests that this domain of the unconscious is

an important source of what Erich Fromm called malignant aggression (Fromm, 1973). The emotions and drives originating here find their expression on the individual scale in acts of violence, sadism, criminality, and murder, and on the collective scale in such manifestations of human nature as totalitarian regimes, wars, bloody revolutions, genocide, and concentration camps. The connections between individual, as well as social, psychopathology and the dynamics of perinatal matrices are fascinating and very convincing. I have discussed them at some length in one of my books (Grof, 1985).

However, the observations from modern consciousness research offer more than just fascinating new insights into human problems and a diagnostic contribution to the understanding of the global crisis. They also suggest new possibilities of approaching the dangerous situation in the world in a way that could influence its psychological roots. The

clues here come from the study of the changes that occur in those individuals who have successfully confronted and neutralized the perinatal forces and connected experientially with the transpersonal level of the psyche.

Examples can be found in the deep experiential work using psychedelics or techniques developed by humanistic and transpersonal psychology, and by the great spiritual traditions of the world. Identical changes have also been described by Abraham Maslow in his study of individuals who had spontaneous mystical experiences (or "peak experiences") and as a result moved in the direction of what he called "self-actualization" or "self-realization" (Maslow, 1964).

People who move psychologically from the dominance of the negative perinatal matrices (the memory of the survival struggle in the birth canal) to that of positive perinatal matrices (memory of nourishing perinatal and postnatal experiences) and of the transpersonal domains of the psyche tend to be deeply transformed by this experience. The interaction of the fetus with the maternal organism is equivalent to the interaction of the adult with all of humanity, all of nature, and the entire universe. Prenatal and perinatal experiences thus represent a prototype and template for the adult perception and experience of the world. The nature and quality of the perinatal matrix influences will shape a person's attitude to other people, to the world, and to existence in general. Profound transpersonal experiences then move the individual out of the narrow framework of identification with the body-ego and lead to

feeling and thinking in terms of cosmic identity and unity with all creation.

An individual who connects experientially with the positive perinatal matrices and with the transpersonal domain feels a great increase of zest and joy in life and develops a capacity to draw satisfaction from many ordinary situations and activities such as simple human interactions, creative work, admiration of nature and art, playing, eating, sleeping, and lovemaking. This is typically associated with deep awareness of the critical importance of the spiritual dimension in the universal scheme of things.

The person involved in such a process usually retains interest in creative activity and enjoys it much more than before. At the same time, there is much less emotional dependence on complicated schemes, fantasies, and future plans as the source of satisfaction. In this state of mind, it becomes obvious that the ultimate measure of the standard of living is the quality of

the life experience and not the quantity of material achievements.

At the same time, the level of aggression is drastically reduced and the individual develops tolerance toward others, reverence for life, and appreciation for the adventure of existence. The concept of human life as a life-and-death struggle for survival gives way to a new image of a cosmic dance or divine play. The critical importance of synergy, cooperation, harmony, and ecological concerns is deeply felt and becomes self-evident.

The aggressive and controlling attitude toward nature (Mother Nature) reflected the precarious experience of the fetus with the

maternal organism in the process of delivery. The new values and attitudes are based on the experiences of the prenatal or postnatal interaction with the mother ("good womb" and "good breast" if there were no serious interferences during these two periods). They are characterized by a strong emphasis on the mutually nourishing, symbiotic, and complementary nature of all relationships in contrast to the exploitative and competitive nature of the old value system.

It becomes obvious that the universe is a unified web, of which we all are meaningful parts. It is, in principle, impossible to do anything to other people, to other nations, or to nature, without simultaneously doing it to ourselves. Thinking in terms of all of humanity, all of life, and the entire planet clearly has to take priority over interests of individuals, families, religious and social



groups, political parties, nations, and races should life on this planet survive. The hopeless "us and them" attitude has to be replaced by a clear realization that we are facing a problem of a collective nature that only a determined cooperative effort can solve.

It seems clear that if large numbers of people in different countries of the world felt, thought, and acted along these lines, our chances of survival would increase. To achieve this, we must complement our efforts in the world of technology that has given us instruments of awesome power by placing an equally strong emphasis on the technology of human transformation. The resulting changes in human consciousness would make it possible for us to use the fruits of modern science constructively and with wisdom.

The broad spectrum of techniques that can increase self-understanding and facilitate consciousness evolution includes a variety of

ancient spiritual practices, as well as modern approaches developed by humanistic and transpersonal psychology. Some of them could be integrated into education, others could find their way into mass media, or be communicated in various art forms. However, the ultimate success or failure of this approach will depend on the determined and focused effort of each of us and the willingness to add to our external activities in the world a systematic effort at self-exploration and inner transformation.

Whatever questions or doubts one may have about the feasibility of this strategy as a world-changing force, it could well be our only real chance under the present circumstances. It is difficult to imagine that the crisis in the world can be solved with the same attitudes

and strategies that were instrumental in its development in the first place. And since, in the last analysis, the current global crisis is the product and reflection of the stage of consciousness evolution of humanity, a radical and lasting solution is inconceivable without inner transformation and a move toward global awareness.

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## Chapter Six

### Individuality:

### A Spiritual Task and Societal Hazard

*John Weir Perry, M.D.*

If we trace the historical evolution of *individuality* through the medium of its psychic representation in myth and ritual, we gain a new perspective on current issues related to the meaning of this term. Today, we define individuality with the simple phrase, "self-determination," implying the accomplishment of one's unique self-hood by fulfilling one's potential abilities using whatever method one chooses, with an ultimate goal of integration and wholeness. In ancient and traditional cultures, however, the individual's role was defined by collective agreement; one fulfilled one's duties



according to one's place in the social structure. In this historical approach, it is, of course, precarious to make general assumptions about cultures, yet in myth and ritual the evolution of individuality is clearly represented.

My interest in this approach grew from psychotherapeutical observations of persons in various degrees of turmoil from the vivid imagery in dreams of ordinary cases in practice to the visionary states or spiritual emergencies of deeply disturbed people. In these latter instances, the imagery arising from the psychic depths is found to have parallels in ancient myths and rituals, and this led me to undertake an extensive study of ancient historical ceremonial practices. Although these disturbed states are regarded in psychiatry as "psychotic," they are not merely disorderly chaotic confusions. On the contrary, they reveal a process with regular features, involving experiences of death and birth, world destruction and creation, and



messianic callings that include ideas of cultural reform and sacred marriages.

In both the ancient practices and in the experiences of people today, the imagery of a spiritual center is prominent, a center from which order and organization are produced either in the individual psyche or in the whole society. In these ancient practices, it is impressive to observe the strong emotional investment of honor and reverence toward the representation of this center. It is in the historical development of the representation of this spiritual center that we find the clearest evidence of the step-by-step evolution of individuality. This image of a spiritual center is, of course, what Jung has called the "archetype of the Self," characteristically represented as a quadrated circle or mandala that combines or unites or reconciles the opposites.

The ritual figure of the Great Man or Unique man as ruler initially occurred in the context of the first appearance of the true city cultures of the Urban Revolution, which took place in four great river valleys of the Near and Far East; the Nile, the Tigris-Euphrates, the Indus, and the Yellow River, in the third and second millennium B.C. Here, the term *city* meant a culture organized according to the functions and specialized occupations of its inhabitants, as opposed to the earlier clan structure, in which organization had been framed in family systems.

In these Bronze Age city states, the Unique Man was often ceremonially represented as a sacral king with divine attributes, and his function was placed at the cosmic axis or world center, at the mid-point of the world image. The world was regarded as kingdom, the kingdom as the world. These sacral kings were usually personifications of the center and of the very life of the kingdom, as its soul, so that whatever happened to the king

also happened to the entire realm. Thus, the society was usually regarded as a corporate body with the king as its very heart and soul. Examples of the sacral kingship in the ancient Near East afford the clearest parallels to the renewal process seen in the visionary states of today, while those in the Far East present the most vivid imagery of the theme of the center.

The New Year Festivals for rejuvenation of the king and the kingdom in the city kingdoms of Mesopotamia exactly followed the groundplan of the renewal process: taking place at the center, re-

versing time to the beginning of creation, using the symbolic death and rejuvenation of the king, the ritual combat between order and chaos, the reenthronement of the victorious king and his *hieros gamos* of sacred marriage, and reading the destinies as a reaffirmation of the will of the gods and the society's allegiance to it. The temple's stage tower represented a world mountain and cosmic axis called *Dur Anki*, the Bond of Heaven and Earth. In the early Sumerian years, the king was called *Lugal*, the Great Man, playing the role of the god of the high sky as upholder of order, and that of the storm god as warrior and chief executive.

Egypt's festivals of reenthronement followed roughly the same pattern, but its kingship was noteworthy for ascribing absolute divinity to the Pharaoh: he was Horus, god of the light of the sky, and Horus was the Pharaoh in the early

dynasties. As Giver of Life and Giver of Order, his *Ka* (soul) provided the *Kas* for all his subjects, who thereby participated in his life as he did in theirs. As the source of life, order, and soul for the realm, the king's position in the scheme of things was at the center, his throne set upon the Primordial Mound that represented the spot of land from which all creation spread in four directions; his capital city, Memphis, was set at the midpoint of the Egyptian world between the Two Lands, Upper and Lower Egypt. The kingship was also dual in another sense; as Horus, the Pharaoh ruled the realm of the living, while the recently deceased king was transfigured into Osiris, who then reigned over the realm of the dead, the ancestors.

India, too, though in much later centuries, had its sacral kingships in which the monarch's person was regarded as a composite of eight divinities. As *Chakravartin*, Wheel King, his rule was universal. The rites of enthronement and

reenthronement emphasized centrality and also rebirth, vividly and explicitly dramatized by his assumption of the cowl of the chorion and of the amnion, and of the waters of the amniotic fluid of the foetal state.

Among the ceremonial expressions of sovereignty in the ancient world, the Chinese ritual is outstandingly satisfying both spiritually and esthetically. Its cosmological setting is a source of delight to modern evolutionists with a systems theory approach, such as Joseph Needham, who said of it that there was no belief in a creator acting from outside, but this cosmos was a self-contained, self-organizing system. In these purely naturalistic terms "the harmonious cooper-



ation of all beings arose, not from the orders of a superior authority external to themselves, but from the fact that they were all parts in a hierarchy of wholes forming a cosmic pattern, and what they obeyed were the internal dictates of their own natures." This was the model upon which the manner of governing in the earliest dynasties was founded. "Heaven" was a barely personified presence presiding over the cosmos, and the "Son of Heaven" was sovereign but did not actively rule this confederacy of principalities.

In the Bronze Age, this Heaven was understood to be made up of the spirits of the departed royal ancestors, the *Ti*, acting as a composite whole; only the sacral kings possessed a soul that would become immortalized as a *Ti*. The ideogram for *Ti* was a vertical phallus, suggesting the generative, life-giving function of such ancestral

spirits, not unlike the role of Osiris in Egypt.

The theme of the Great Individual was suffused throughout this ideology of the kingship. Heaven, *T'ien*, was, in its earliest written form represented by the character in Figure 1, obviously signifying the Great man, the conglomerate embodiment of the *Ti*. It is now written as in Figure 2. In the second dynasty (first millennium B.C.), the Chou, the sacral king was represented by the character in Figure 3, the Great Man, now with his feet planted on the ground. He was *T'ien-tse*, the Son of Heaven, and participated in the nature of Heaven itself as spokesman and mediator. This meant that the accumulated experience of the ancestors was embodied in the person of the sacral king. The Son of Heaven alone, as the ruling member of the dynasty, could assume the title of *Wang*, the king, as his special prerogative. According to later philosophers, Figure 4 represented a cosmic axis with Heaven, man, and Earth united through

the person of the king, a beautiful rendering of the role of the center.

Among the many indications of the central position of this sacred figure there was consistent emphasis on its being not only a midpoint but also a north-south axis. The name of China was written in characters implying this, as seen in Figure 5: *Chung Kuo*, the "Middle Kingdom," "center" as a rectangle traversed by a vertical line as an axis, "kingdom" as a square enclosure containing lines indicating the kingship.

The capital cities of the Shang and Chou Dynasties (second and first millennium B.C.) were laid out in the manner represented in Figure 6. Each was a quadrated square or rectangular city with avenues



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

and gates oriented to the cardinal directions, and in the center, the king's palace, facing south on an

axis dividing the populace into two moieties or halves, according to lineage. In front of the place on one side was the Temple of the Ancestors, important to the function of mediator, and on the other side, the Altar of Earth, concerned with the feminine principle of increase and life-giving. Here, then, was a Yang and Yin, Heaven and Earth, division in these two sacred places, temple and altar, on either side of the axis.

A little later on, the realm that is the earth, that is, the whole world, was represented in the bronze cosmic mirrors of the Han Dynasty (the end of the first millennium B.C.) as seen in Figure 7,

Figure 5

中国

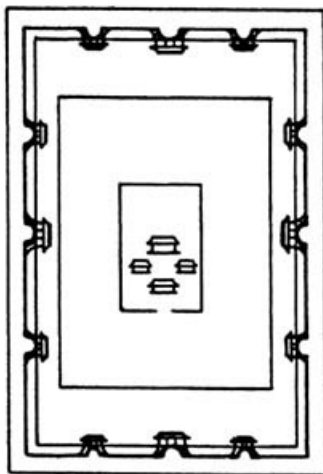


Figure 6

called TLV design. The Middle Kingdom was seen as a square with gates in the cardinal directions (the T's), and marks near the periphery of the design (the V's), indicating that there is an implied cross here with limbs extending out, the

L's suggesting a swastika perhaps. These areas, the Four Seas, in the four directions were considered the realms of the barbarians, the chaos that was the king's task to bring into the organization of the ordered world as his cosmocratic function. The Son of Heaven had his position at the center, indicated by a burnished mound.

Also, in the dimension of actuality, the kingdom had roughly the shape of a quadrated circle with the four sacred mountains in the cardinal directions and a fifth at the center, which had a certain ritual significance at that time. The centrality, the quadrating of space, and the strict ordering and balancing of design were thoroughly represented in these symbolic forms. These mandala patterns antedated the Tibetan ones by many centuries.

A very interesting further representation of centrality was the ceremonial building for the functions of the king, which was the





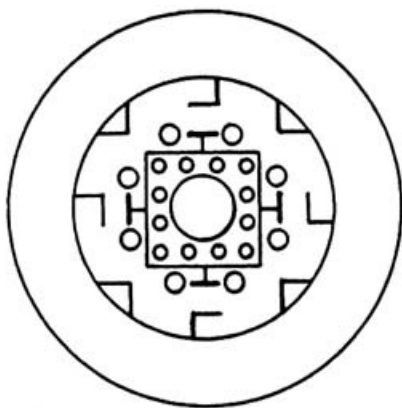


Figure 7

*Ming-Tang*, the "Hall of Light" or "Hall of Brilliance," where he performed his kingly rituals (Figure 8). It was "square below" representing earth, and "round above" representing the dome of the sky, where he would observe the night heavens and keep track of time and the seasons. It was all surrounded by a *Pi* moat, which signified

Heaven again. In the central building was an audience hall where the Son of Heaven would sit on his throne with the Pole Star at his back, facing south. In early times, this was surrounded by four square chapels; later there were eight, and upstairs was the round observatory platform. A king of very early times had the custom of making ceremonial rounds of the entire kingdom by going to the five holy mountains, not to explore, but to confirm his active relation to the four quarters of the realm and "to spread his virtue among them."

It was not too long before the kings considered such a routine wearisome, and instead they travelled only to the four gates of the capital city. Finally, they did all this in the *Ming-Tang* alone, making the rounds of the four quarters and also of the seasons and the months. This was considered a function of the king as "master of time" and "master of space." He faced the south with the Pole Star at his back, toward which the

stars of heaven turn and circulate around it. That was the function of the sacral king; like the Pole

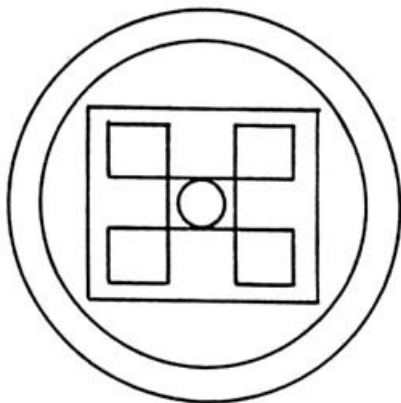


Figure 8

Star, the people would turn their gaze upon him and the life of the realm would circulate about him, so to speak, and thus "remain calm and docile," in harmony.

Scholars have recently discovered that these kings of the Shang and early Chou Dynasties

were also considered shamans. They were known as "rain kings" for some while, but that was the least of their functions. They also had the ability to fly like shamans into the heavens, and they could traverse earth, water, and air at will. They had powers of divination and prognostication and they also apparently had healing powers. The Shang bronzes, which have been unearthed during the last century, have animals sculpted around them, facing each other in pairs. Recent studies of these animals have found that they are the helping animals of the shaman, the ones who give him shamanic powers. Therefore, to have big bronze cauldrons, made so exquisitely, with many animals around them, was designated the spiritually effective powers of the sacral king.

The monarch was also a father figure: he had a benevolent role, to care for the people and he carried the responsibility for their well-being. The sage kings of antiquity, of the legendary first dynasty, the Hsia Dynasty of the end of the third

millennium B.C., were exemplars of this particular kind of virtue, or responsibility, of caring,

and of nonassertion *wu-wei* governing without asserting heavy-handed or authoritarian dominance.

There is something about this mythic psychology that is always evanescent; the evolutionary process is relentless. This whole ceremonial system became desanctified very soon. For it to be sacred or sanctified meant that the archetypal conviction or dynamic was in it. At that time, the kingship was filled with potential for the future. It was a psychologically pregnant state about to give birth to many particular attributes of consciousness that would follow in the succeeding centuries, but which were first represented merely in symbolic form or in ritual ceremonial. The myth and ritual were essential to give new meaning for a new lifestyle in that kind of urban society. But the habit throughout history is that myth arises in times of



bewilderment among new conditions and gives the necessary guidelines for psychic energies in new culture forms. Then gradually the personifications or representations of those images become desanctified and secular.

The fate of this mode of governing was most clearly represented in the histories of Egypt and of China, where the prerogatives and privileges of royalty were increasingly mimicked by the aristocracy. Petty princes and rulers of the component states comprising the realm took these attributes upon themselves. They governed more and more autonomously, built equally magnificent palaces and tombs for themselves, and gathered large armies to assert their growing power. In this way, the sacred potency and prestige of the status of the "Great Individual" was gradually diffused from the center and became more and more secularized. Ambition and greed for expanding land and mounting wealth led to unceasing wars between these

nobles.

The Egyptian experience is noteworthy. In their Feudal Age, the latter part of the third millennium B.C., a kind of prophetism appeared that was to recur in Israel almost two thousand years later on the same model. Wise men such as Ipuwer lamented the lawlessness, marauding, and prevailing poverty, and placed the blame for this chaos squarely on the Pharaoh for not carrying out the duties of his function; this introduced the vision of a messianic hero who would restore the virtues of the ideal of the kingship. Another significant development was the democratization of the role of Osiris in the mortuary cult. In the early dynasties the king alone had the privilege of being transfigured into Osiris; but soon the aristocracy, instead of

merely accompanying the monarch on his journey after death, began to assume the right to be similarly transformed, and finally the common man could buy the same funerary procedure to "become an Osiris" at his death. These phenomena graphically portray the diffusion of the attributes of the center downward and outward to the members of the society.

In China, much the same sort of history occurred two thousand years later. During the first half of the first millennium B.C., the Chou dynasty gradually lost its authority in all but name, and a Feudal Age followed in which the parts strove against each other at the expense of the welfare of the whole. Times of dire distress and intense suffering among the people resulted, as crops and manpower were appropriated for the warring armies of the various states in their power struggles against one another. However, in

China's "Times of Troubles," in the midst of her most critical years when the very survival of the culture was seriously threatened, a remarkable phenomenon took place. A strong move toward healing was undertaken by the gifted visionaries of the "Hundred Schools" of the philosophers, consisting of efforts at a reexamination of the basic principles of governing and of societal cohesion by spiritual cultivation. Certain of their doctrines were influential in redefining the concept of individuality.

In spite of the public image of Confucius as an advocate of a sort of Victorian propriety, he was one of the great revolutionaries of history, championing a new concept of democracy, a principle that possessed a mystique comparable to that of the *Tao* among the Quietists. This virtue (force) called *Jen*, usually misleadingly translated as "supreme virtue," actually means human-hearted compassion or loving caring. Under its influence, the society would function

as one great family in which all men would be brothers; this was the origin of "brotherly love." When asked about perfect knowledge, Confucius said it was "to know all men," and about perfect virtue he said it was "to love all men." He also originated the concept of the Golden Rule, and of the equality of all men, including even the "barbarians," an idea too preposterous to be accepted at the time.

A century later, Mencius, the foremost follower of Confucius, taught that selflessness can lead one to an identification of the self with the universe so that one can realize that the myriad things of the cosmos are all within us. By such spiritual cultivation, all men are

capable of becoming sage kings like the great exemplars of the kingship, Yao and Shun.

Mencius was a perceptive psychologist who traced the dynamics of societal relationships between rulers and ruled to its origins within the family system, between parents and children. Goodness, he said, was innate.

Mo-tse was an opponent of the Confucian school who proclaimed a doctrine of universal love, *Chien Ai*, a virtue to be developed by cultivating spirituality. He argued that the model of the family was not universal enough, and that all men should hold an equal love for one another. He was a pre-Christian Christian.

The Taoists were also opponents of the Confucian teachings, declaring that those scholars talked too much, and that the more one talks of virtues of love and loyalty and benevolence, the more one betrays the fact that

one does not yet have them. Following the Way of Nature, no such admonitions are required. Cultivating the Light in this spirit, the Spiritual Center is found inside; it does not need a representation in the center of government.

These doctrines reveal the insight that societal harmony, once believed to emanate only from the benevolence generated by the Son of Heaven at the center of the world, can be cultivated from within the individuals composing the society. The center of order and integration, once expressed in the myth and ritual of the kingship, can be found inside oneself. Order need not be imposed from above if it is evoked from within. Once more I find a remarkable parallel to the visionary experience called psychotic, which typically starts with imagery of power and dominance and with concerns of inordinate prestige, but ends with equally compelling concerns for the capacities for a loving relationship in the life of the individual and in

society.

This level of spiritual sophistication and insight was not reached by the cultures of the ancient Near East, who spent their energies in warring. Sumer disappeared as mysteriously as it had arrived; Akkad overran Sumer, but was in its turn taken over by the Assyrians until both merged into the empire of Cyrus of Iran. None had the chance to reach the full cultural maturity of China; and it was left to Israel to accomplish the task of inward realization and internalization of the kingship. In Israel, many centuries of visionary work by its prophets began with the desire for the restoration of the ideal of the sacral kingship in a strong ruler but evolved into the more



subtle concept of a messiah who would be a spiritual shepherd of the people. Jesus brought the various elements of this long tradition into a refined expression of a purely inward and nonpolitical image of his Davidic kingship, characterized by the ethic of *agape*, a love of all the members of this Kingdom of God for one another.

In India, too, Gautama the Buddha had to decide whether to follow the career of a *Chakravartin*, a Universal King, for which he was born and raised, or of an Enlightened One, for which he prepared himself by his meditation under the Bo Tree. He, too, of course, advocated a way of life characterized by compassion and kindness toward all beings. Both this Buddhahood and this Christ nature represent the perfected form of the inner sacral kingship as a psychic reality.

Thus, through a history of myth and ritual, the

evolution of the concept of individuality is seen. At the beginning of the Urban Revolution, the spiritual center was externalized in the figure of the sole Great Individual, the sacral king. As it gradually diffused among the members of the aristocracy, this form of individuality became secularized and desanctified to willful self-seeking. Under the duress of crises, as societies became increasingly chaotic, prophets and visionaries perceived the dynamic of the inward realization of the center and its kingly myth and ritual forms. This internalization marked the beginning of the full democratization of these rituals, and raised the need for a new principle by which order might be preserved in societal structure. For this the visionaries perceived the dynamic of living fellowship and compassion as an absolute prerequisite to make the new individuality work.

This historical account clearly demonstrates that individuality is safe and healthy for society only

if it is kept in balance with societal concerns and if the motive of personal power is compensated for by an equally strong motive to care for others.

Needless to say, the problems we face today grow out of a definition of individuality that has come to mean mere self-seeking, and a democracy that has altogether lost its meaning. Especially in America, individuals live in separateness, even isolation. In our competitive system, we seem to think one must be out for oneself. Once again, the parts are functioning without regard for the interests of the whole. Immense numbers of people grow up without any sense of belonging to a community and so they lack feelings of loyalty and caring;

crime, visible and invisible, mounts. One of the principal difficulties is that the mention of love in any but the most personal framework has become sentimentalized, emasculated, relegated to a Sunday school brand of ephemeral idealization. Whole books are written on states of consciousness and their psychology, wherein one finds no mention of love. Yet love remains the most essential dynamic in the healthy functioning of society.

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## Chapter Seven

### Thoughts on Mysticism as Frontier of Consciousness Evolution

*Brother David Steindl-Rast, PH.D.*

I like to think about mysticism as a particular frontier of consciousness evolution. It is under this aspect that I would like to explore the problem of mysticism with you today. In the first part of my talk, I will focus on some general and universal features of the mystical quest. In the second half, I will focus on its Christian version, specifying what makes a certain form of mysticism Christian. But obviously, even in discussing the most general aspects of mysticism, I will already be speaking as somebody standing in the Christian tradition. It will not be a discussion of absolutely pure mysticism, if

something like that is at all possible. Rather, I will be looking at mysticism as somebody who discovered it primarily through the Christian tradition. However, I have been very fortunate to be exposed to other mystical traditions, particularly the Buddhist and the Hindu one. This has broadened and deepened my own view of mysticism.

Today's confrontation with mysticism will be a very personal task for you. Of course, if you face the frontiers of consciousness in the right way, you always make it personal, you always apply what you see to your own life. But when Fritjof Capra, for instance, speaks about physics, that is a field of knowledge out there. It is optional to what degree you personalize your insights. When we speak about

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mysticism as a field of investigation out there somewhere, we have already missed the point. It is your own mysticism that we are talking about or else it is nothing at all.

The mystics are not a special kind of human being. But every human being is a special kind of mystic. The challenge for you is to discover as soon as possible what particular kind of mystic you are. Find where your own mystical experience lies and explore that. What I am telling you comes out of my own experience and wants to reach your experience. That is the important thing. Allow your own experience to resonate with what I put before you. Ask yourselves here, step by step, "Is this true for me? Does this ring true for me?" If it does not ring true, please speak up. We are cooperating here. Each one of us has to make a contribution so that in the end, we will be able to speak about

mysticism in terms that are meaningful for all of us here. It will become clear as we go along that we are speaking about the mental realm in which all of us are one, the point where we all are connected. At the same time, we are speaking about the very experience that shows us what is true, the experience from which we take the standard for what we mean by "real." Our mystic experience is the point where we are all one. And it is at the same time the measure, the standard for what is real. Therefore, it is only on this basis that we can ever agree on what is true or real. Mystic awareness is the deepest anchor for human solidarity. But more of this later.

Our next step must be to remember our own mystical experience. It is necessary that you remember a moment in which you yourself had the kind of experience that we call mystical. We will explore this experience together as we go along, but we need something to work with. So you need to have your own experience clearly in



mind. Whatever I say can then be checked out against this experience. Therefore, the first step is that you clearly remember an experience that will qualify. Remember a moment that stands out in your memory as making life meaningful. Something of which you would say, "Well, for that kind of experience it is worth being alive." That would be sort of the lowest common denominator. You ought to be able to say, "At that moment life made sense." Even if you say, "For me, most of the time, life makes no sense whatsoever," there surely was a moment when it seemed to make sense. That is the moment we want to latch onto. For some this is a rare occasion.

Another person may say, "I don't know which one to choose, I'm just showered with this kind of experience. I wallow in it, it comes fifteen times in one day." That does not make any difference. What matters is for you to remember a moment in which life made sense. That will be our starting point.

And in order to prime the pump I will read you a short passage that many of you will be familiar with. It comes from a well-known play, Eugene O'Neill's "A Long Day's Journey into Night." You do not have to know the play or the plot in order to appreciate this passage. Edmund is telling Tyron about this kind of experience. He is slightly drunk at the time, which makes it easier for him to talk about it. See if your own memory associates with what Edmund says.

You've just told me some high spots in your memories. Want to hear mine? They're all connected with the sea.

Here's one. When I was on the Squarehead square rigger, bound for Buenos Aires. Full moon in the Trades. The old hooker driving fourteen knots. I lay on the bowsprit, facing astern, with the water foaming into spume under me, the masts with every sail white in the moonlight, towering high above me. I became drunk with the beauty and singing rhythm of it, and for a moment I lost myself actually lost my life. I was set free! I dissolved in the sea, became white sails and flying spray, became beauty and rhythm, became moonlight and the ship and the high dim-starred sky! I belonged without past or future, within peace and unity and wild joy, within something greater than my own life, or the life of Man, to Life itself! To God, if you want to put it that way. And several other times in my life, when I was swimming far out, or lying alone on a beach, I have had the same experience. Became the sun, the hot sand, green seaweed anchored to a rock, swaying in the tide. Like a saint's vision of beatitude. Like the veil of things as they seem drawn back by an unseen hand. For a second there is meaning! Then the hand lets the veil fall and you are alone, lost in the fog again, and you stumble on toward nowhere, for no good reason.

Some of this ought to ring a bell within us. That is the great thing about a poetic statement: The key words are all there. "I lost myself."

Maybe this is the only key phrase of which you can say, "I know what he is talking about. In that moment I lost myself." Or, as T. S. Eliot puts it, "Lost in a shaft of sunlight." You see this shaft of sunlight coming out of a cloud, and looking at it you lose yourself. You look into somebody's eyes, and you just drown in them and lose yourself in this vision. "I lost myself." Or, "I was set free," For a moment I was set free. It was like coming out of a cage. Most of the time I am caged, in my own cage. I am my own cage keeper. But for a moment I am out, I am free. For some unknown reason I go right back into the cage. Maybe I feel safer there. But we all have moments when we come out of the cage, "I was set free." Or another key phrase: "I dissolved in the sea. I became white sails." I dissolved in what I saw. I became one with everything that I saw. That is often an aspect of our mystic experience. "I belonged." "I belonged" may be

one of the most important key phrases. Most of the time we feel that we are somehow left out. We are standing outside. There is all this wonderful world and life going on, and we are somewhat alienated from it, outsiders, as it were. But for a moment we belong. We are a part of that great dance, everybody welcomes us; everything welcomes us. "I belonged without past or future." That is another aspect of our mystic moments: Time seems to fall away. Time stands still. It is what Eliot calls a "moment in and out of time." It is in time and yet it is out of time. "I belonged within peace and unity and a wild joy, within something greater than my own life or life itself . . . to God if you want to put it that way." We will not bring God in as yet. We are not ready for that. But we will come back to it.

I will now give you a definition for "mystic experience." You may find it in any dictionary. It is nothing very special. But it will be helpful as a

working definition. Mysticism in the broadest sense is "the experience of communion with Ultimate Reality." Each of these three points is important. It is an experience. Mysticism is not theory but practical experience your own. And it is a special kind of experience, namely, an experience of communion. That communion aspect is very important. What stands in the foreground of your particular experience may be communion in a limited sense. You may experience deep communion by sharing with one other person or with an animal, with a pet. You may be focusing, for example, on a moment when you lost your pet and found it again. That may

be one of those mystical moments. But this kind of experience always implies a greater communion, it always implies a communion that has no limits. That is why we speak of communion with Ultimate Reality. Now let us go through that definition point by point.

Experience is a helpful word, but it hides its own traps. Experience is a highly inflated term today. When I speak of experience, you may think, "Oh wow, this must be one of those big bangers, but I have never had one of those." But what is important here, when we speak of experience, it not its magnitude. What is important is that you become aware of something. Awareness is what we are after here. This awareness may have come suddenly and overwhelmingly, but it may also have come ever so gradually. My favorite image for this is the coming of spring. Sometimes spring comes suddenly, with a big bang.

Yesterday it was still winter, but today spring is in the air. Spring came overnight. In other years it comes so gradually that you can not even say when it came. A long drawn-out battle was going back and forth. But eventually it is spring. You do not know how it came, but all that matters is that spring is here. And so all that matters is that you eventually become aware deep within you of ultimate communion. Whether it came with one sudden explosion or very, very slowly does not make any difference. Remember: Awareness is what counts no matter how it seeps into your consciousness.

You may not notice when you are passing that border of consciousness. Sometimes when you pass into another country you have to check your passport and undergo all sorts of border controls. Then there is no question where you are. But at other times you just pass through on the train. Nobody checked your passport, but there you are. Frontiers are not always the same. You may have



passed a frontier of awareness without notice. The important thing is that you have passed it. And the awareness that concerns us here is experiential awareness of communion.

But "communion" is another one of those inflated words today. The perfect community is one of the most alluring mirages in our time. Well, what concerns us here is rather a deep sense of belonging. We may have that sense of belonging without ever finding its external expression in a closely knit community. What matters is our awareness that we belong. We are not aliens, outcasts, orphans in this world. Kabir, the great mystic poet says:

We sense that there is some sort of spirit that loves  
Birds and animals and the ants  
Perhaps the same one who gave a radiance to you  
In your mother's womb.  
Is it logical you would be walking around entirely  
orphaned now?

Remember your life in the womb. Something put you together; something fashioned you there; something brought you out; something saw you through. Is it possible that that one would leave you orphaned now? That is the mystical insight of belonging. Before anything else, you belong. Is it imaginable that you should no longer belong? Is it imaginable that you should really be orphaned now? When you ask yourself that question and at least begin to doubt that you should be orphaned now, then you are moving from alienation to belonging.

Belonging and alienation, that is the polarity about which we are talking. That polarity is the

pivot of our spiritual life. One pole is alienation. We all know what that is. We know what it feels like: being cut off from everything, from ourselves, from anything that has meaning, from all others. And the opposite pole to alienation is belonging. All that ultimately matters in our life is movement from alienation to belonging, often with many setbacks. This has always been the essential struggle of spiritual life. But we need a vocabulary that makes sense to us today. Alienation is our contemporary word for what has been called sin and, therefore, the contemporary word for salvation is belonging. Sin and salvation have become jargon words, and we may as well declare a moratorium on them. I am only referring to these terms because we do not want to lose the connection with the way people have been speaking about the same realities in the past. For us, "sin" is not a helpful word because our notion of sin has become limited to "do's and don'ts." Originally, the term referred to alienation from self, from others,

from the divine reality within and beyond us. For us, today, the word alienation conveys precisely what tradition calls "sin." And if you think of "belonging" in its ultimate, fullest sense, then you also know what "salvation" means. That is what we long for, namely, belonging, wholeness, communion with our own true self, with all others, with the divine.

This reference to communion with the divine leads us to the third element of our definition of mysticism as "experience of communion with Ultimate Reality." If we had problems with the terms "experience" and "communion," these problems are compounded when we come to speak of Ultimate Reality, or the divine, or God. We could avoid misunderstandings by speaking of Ultimate Reality rather than God. All those who feel comfortable with the word "God" will certainly agree that God is the Ultimate Reality. But there are many whom the term God makes uneasy, and often for good reasons. Yet, speaking of Christian mysticism, we shall have to face the notion of God sooner or later. Why not do so right now?

We must not start out with what someone else has told us about God. We have to rediscover God from within. And there we discover God as

the one to whom we belong. That is all. Before we know anything *about* God, we know God. This is true for every one of us. We know God as the one to whom we belong. Anyone who uses the word "God" correctly uses it in this sense. If it is used in any other sense, you are the judges of how this word is to be used because you know it from experience. Each one of us knows God from experience. The word "God" is a label, we do not need to use it. We could talk about religion forever without using the word God. But it can be a helpful word. It links our own experience with all the theistic traditions. We must start with our experience. But it helps to link that experience with what millions of people have experienced and spoken about in the theistic traditions of the world. Thus, we can profit from what others have experienced. You can compare your own experience with the experience of others if you have this key word. But do not allow anybody to give you this term God loaded already with lots of notions. Discover its content

for yourself!

I would like to read you the short description of one of those discoveries of God. It comes from the autobiography of Mary Austin. It is amazing how often you find that kind of experience in the early parts of autobiographies. And it is important for you to find it in your own autobiography. So Mary Austin says here:

I must have been between five and six when this experience happened to me. It was a summer morning, and the child I was had walked down through the orchard alone and come out on the brow of a sloping hill where there were grass and

a wind blowing and one tall tree reaching into the infinite immensities of blueness. Quite suddenly, after a moment of quietness there, earth and sky and tree and wind-blown grass and the child in the midst of them came alive together with a pulsing light of consciousness. To this day I can recall the swift inclusive awareness of each for the wholeI in them and they in me and all of us enclosed in a warm lucent bubble of livingness.

Now up to this point there is nothing new. We know it from our own experience. We have heard it in Eugene O'Neill's experience. But now comes the reason why I am reading this particular passage to you. Because Mary Austin describes so wonderfully the discovery of God. "I remember the child looking everywhere for the source of this happy wonder and at last she questioned: 'God?' because that was the only awesome word she knew." So we have two moments here. First, the discovery of Godthen putting the word on it. Experience is the real discovery. Then there is this awesome word that



does not fit anywhere else, so now you try this word on your experience. You ask yourself that is the first stage "God?" Could this experience have anything to do with God? And then, "deep inside, like the murmurous ring of a bell, she heard the answer, 'God, God.'"

That simply means "okay, that will fit." Let us try that word. "How long this ineffable moment lasted I never knew. It broke like a bubble at the sudden singing of a bird. And the wind blew and the world was the same as ever only never *quite* the same." (From *The Unattended Moment*, by Michael Paffard, London, SCM Press Ltd., 1976.)

That is a discovery, the passing over a frontier of consciousness. From here you cannot go back. You have discovered something that you can explore from here on forever. Mysticism is the "exploration into God." Christopher Fry coined that expression. In his play, "A Sleep of Prisoners," he says, "Affairs are now soul-sized,

the enterprise is exploration into God." This is what life is all about: exploration into God. It is like opening your eyes. There it is, the land to which you belong. This is where you are at home. And now you can spend the rest of eternity exploring this territory.

This is where the religious traditions come in. They all start from mystical experience. There is not one religious tradition in the world that starts from anything else. Often it starts historically with the mystical experience of the founder or reformer. Always it starts psychologically with the mystical experience of the believer. This is the starting point. And the end point of every religion in the world is the same. The goal of every religion is to make all experience ultimate belonging and act accordingly. That would be heaven. But if religion is this unifying force, if it starts with our deepest unity and leads supposedly to the point where everything will be an unfolding of this oneness, how come the religions are such divisive factors in the world? In other words, how does one get from the mystic experience that is within to the religions out there? How does one get from religious experience to religious tradition, from Religion

to the religions? You know the answer. It is not only a process, something that happens out there. You know from your own experience how mystic experience inevitably turns into doctrine, ethics, and ritual, the key elements of every religious tradition. Let us check this out.

Mysticism is the heart of religion. Admittedly so. The heart of every religion is the religion of the heart. You know the heart of religion from experience. But how does one get from the inner core of religion to its paraphernalia out there? The answer is: inevitably! You inevitably get there somehow or other, even in your own private religion. There are certain things that the human mind inevitably does with any experience. Applied to our mystical experience, the mind turns it inevitably into doctrine, ethics, and ritual. Let us look more closely to see how this happens.

The first thing is that your intellect swoops down on your experience and starts interpreting it. You

can not help that. When you were trying to remember your own mystic experience a little while ago, you were already beginning to interpret it. You said something about it to yourself. And by this interpretation, you began to form a religious doctrine. That is where religious doctrine begins. This process is inevitable. Wherever there is experience, there must be interpretation of that experience. We can not help it. Our mind works that way. And that is what doctrine is, interpretation of religious experience.

Every religion contains an element of doctrine. It may be merely rudimentary, or it may be highly elaborate. Even your private religion inevitably contains its own doctrine. If you had a long time to work with it, that doctrine will be more elaborate. In young religion it will be simpler. If a religion has lasted for millennia, you can imagine that a lot of interpretation has happened. At first, doctrine is closely linked with the experience which it interprets. The experience is still very much alive, and you can continue to reinterpret it. The next generation is already a bit removed from that experience. It is interpreting the interpretation of the original experience. And once you have twenty seven generations, each one is interpreting the interpretation of an interpretation of an interpretation. We get further and further removed from the original experience. You cannot help that. But the interpretation, the doctrine, should continuously

be linked with your own mystical experience in order to stay alive.

As children, many of us were exposed to all sorts of doctrines about God without anybody ever encouraging us to discover God first-hand within ourselves. This is an injustice, a deprivation. When religion's teaching is no longer linked with your own experience, doctrine turns into *dogmatism*. By dogmatism I mean a hardened doctrine, a doctrine that is no longer alive, that just sits there. Doctrine, as the interpretation of your mystic experience, is necessary. But it always has the tendency to deteriorate into dogmatism. (Please understand that dogmatism and dogma are not necessarily connected. Dogma is simply meant to pin down a doctrine in a form that says, "Well, this one we have settled; now let us go on and continue to explore." Dogma is meant to be a firm sort of stepping stone on the way to further exploration.) Any doctrine can deteriorate into dogmatism. The great task of the

intellect is to keep religion healthy by confronting and connecting again and again doctrine and mysticism with one another.

So much for the intellect. But your will (your willingness, not your willfulness) also has its task. Just like your intellect, your will does something with every experience. Whenever you experience something, your will says, "This is nice; let's go after that," or else "I don't want to have anything to do with that!" We are concerned with these two possibilities when we speak of the will. But unfortunately, it is not as simple as that, because our intellect and our will work closely together. After your mystic experience, your will



may say, "Wow, this limitless belonging, that's terrific! It's all I ever wanted. Let's go on after that." But your intellect warns you, "Be careful, you're going out on a limb, you don't know what all the implications are. Not so fast!" Your will is willing to commit itself, but you are fearful. Here we are suddenly in the realm of ethics, of morals. The realm where fearfulness struggles against commitment to limitless belonging, that is the arena of morality. That is why morality is another element of every religion.

If I really belong in the way in which I have experienced it in my mystic moments, then I must draw certain consequences. But fear draws a line somewhere. In your wonderful mystical moments you were not drawing lines between educated and uneducated. You were not drawing lines between black and white. You were not drawing lines between male and female, even

between human and nonhuman. You are not drawing any lines. And if you belong to all, then you have obligations towards all. At the moment of your mystical experience, you happily accept all these obligations. Ethics, morality, is simply a spelling out of how to live when you take your ultimate belonging seriously.

Inevitably, we begin to formulate our obligations. After all, we do not live in a vacuum, but in society. When morality is first formulated, it is still alive. You can still go back to the experience and understand what you meant by the formulation. But life goes on. Time goes by. The "do"s and "don't"s, once formulated, do not change. But now you have moved to a different spot. You would not express your obligations in the same way today. But there they stand, these "do"s and "don't"s, and they are no longer connected with your deepest sense of belonging. When that happens, morality deteriorates into *moralism*.

Just as we distinguished doctrine from dogmatism, we can distinguish morals from moralism. Morals is the expression of our commitment to belonging. When that commitment is formulated, the formation has a tendency to harden until the expression hardens. Difference sits out there by itself, unconnected with experience. It can even come into contradiction with the living experience of belonging. The more you have had to do with formalized religion, the more you could give examples of morality coming into contrast with what that very religion preaches. To avoid moralism, you have to

continuously go back to the experience at the root of religion. Morality has to be judged by your mystic experience.

But that is only one half. The mystic experience, if you really want to keep it pure and healthy, has to be judged by morals. The confrontation works both ways. If you want to have a healthy spiritual life, you have to allow for this interplay. It takes too long to reinvent the wheel. In religion, just as in other areas of human life, certain inventions have been made that can help us a great deal. Explorers check their findings against what other explorers have found. It would be a very impoverished life if you had to do everything yourself. At this point, I would put in a plug for religious traditions. All of them have their real problems, but they also have a great deal of wisdom that has accumulated. I certainly would not advise you to take it all, unchecked; that

should be clear by now. But you might benefit by allowing yourself to be formed by tradition, just like artists are formed by a tradition before they set out to make their own discoveries. That is a delicate task.

There is a third area in which religion springs from the mystical experience, namely, ritual. There is no religion in the world that does not have some sort of doctrine. There is no religion in the world that does not have some sort of moral teachings. And there is no religion in the world that does not have some sort of ritual. But how does ritual arise from your mystic experience? Just as the intellect interprets the experience, and the will commits you to it, so your emotions, your feelings, celebrate that experience. And that is where ritual comes in.

Ritual is, first and foremost, a celebration of limitless belonging. Check this out against your own experience. Some of the rituals out there, in the traditional historic religions, may look

bizarre. But you may have anniversary celebrations of a deep spiritual experience. Well, there you have a ritual calendar, like most religions have. You may keep going back to the place where that experience overwhelmed you. Well, there you have the ritual of pilgrimage. Let us say it happened at the beach. Every beach in the world is now a sacred place for you because it always brings back that experience. Or a tree becomes in that way a sacred tree for you. Ritual, when it is alive, is the celebration of mystic experience. It is a remembering that makes the experience present again. But ritual can deteriorate into *ritualism*. That happens whenever the ritual action no longer

leads you back to the experience, but becomes an end in itself. You know no longer why, you just go through the motions. That is the way it has always been; that is the way it is supposed to be done; and so you go through this ritual; and it does not do anything for you. That is ritualism. But ritual, rightly understood, is meant to lead you continuously back, not only to something that happened in the past, but to your own most intimate mystical experience.

Allow me to summarize briefly what we have seen so far. First, we came to agree on a working definition of mysticism as "experience of communion with Ultimate Reality" (with God, if you can use that term). This definition is based on our own experience. It can be checked out against your own experience, for we are all mystics. The mysticism of which we are speaking here, the religion of the heart, is the heart of

every religion. But the question arises, how do we get from the experience of communion with Ultimate Reality to all those religions around us with their specific historical, cultural, and theological peculiarities?

My answer is that different times and different places have provided different conditions for interpreting, applying, and celebrating the mystic experience. This resulted in the variety of religions in the world. All of them, however, spring from the same seed, the mystic experience. And all of them ripen towards the same harvest, the full fruition of the mystic awareness in human society.

The essence of mystic awareness is a sense of ultimate belonging. The various religious doctrines come about as this mystic awareness is variously interpreted by the human intellect. The moral systems of different religions come about when the human will draws more or less radical consequences for human behavior from the



mystic awareness of our belonging together. And religious ritual in its many forms comes about when human emotions celebrate the awareness of ultimate belonging, utilizing the different means which different cultural settings offer.

The health and vitality of a given religion depends on the constant interplay between doctrine, ethics, and ritual on the one hand and the mystic awareness of the believer on the other. Where this interplay dries up, doctrine hardens into dogmatism, ethics into legalism, and ritual into ritualism. Only the continuous renewal of a given religious tradition from its mystical core can keep it alive and aware of what

religion essentially is, namely, "exploration into God" at the frontier of human consciousness.

An image that I have sometimes used to illustrate the relationship between the mystic experience and religious tradition is that of a volcanic eruption. There is that hot magma gushing forth out of the depth of the earth. And then it flows down on the sides of the mountain. The longer it flows, the more time it has to cool off. And the more it cools, the less it looks like fire. At the bottom of the mountain, you find just layers and layers of rock. No one would think that this was ever bright, hot, fiery. But along comes the mystic. The mystic pokes holes through these layers and layers of rock until the fire gushes forth again, the original fire. Since each one of us is a mystic, this is our task. But as we rise to our responsibility, we will inevitably clash with the institution.

The question is: Do we have the grace and the strength and the courage to take on our prophetic task? You see, the mystic is also the prophet. And the prophetic stance is a double one. It demands a double courage, the courage to speak out and the courage to stay in. It takes a good deal of courage to speak out, not necessarily with words. Often a silent witness is much more of a witness. By word or by silence, the prophet speaks out. It is difficult enough to speak out and then to get out as quickly as you can, to say your thing and run. But the second half of the prophetic stance is to stay in, stay in the community against which you have to speak out. But it will not do to stay in and to blend with the woodwork, to stay in and lie low. That is not prophetic either. The most difficult thing is demanded from us: to stay in *and* to speak out. Nothing less will do.

To stay in would be easy if we could disappear. To speak out would be easy if we could get out.

But then you would no longer be a prophet, you would merely be an outside critic; that has happened to many tired prophets. They have become outside critics. As long as they were prophets within, they had leverage; they were able to change things. Now, on the outside, they say the same things, but it does not phase anybody anymore. But to stay in and speak out means crucifixion. The staying in is symbolized by this cross because you stay in; you can not go anywhere else. It is rammed into the ground, and it is the vertical post of the cross. The horizontal post symbolizes the speaking out. It happens to fit in the Christian

tradition very nicely. But the cross of the prophet is there in every tradition.

This leads right into the second great question of our topic: What is it that makes mysticism Christian? Mysticism is a phenomenon that we find in all the great religious traditions. It is a basic human phenomenon. Every human being is a mystic, although some may be more talented than others. Some may have developed that capacity further than others; but basically mysticism belongs to every human being. It is universal. Now, among the many different forms of mysticism, we find also Christian mysticism. Why do we call it Christian? What makes it Christian? We could answer that mysticism is Christian when it is related to the person of Jesus Christ in one way or another. That is enough for a starting point.

It seems important to me to start out in this way,

because this definition allows for degrees. A particular form of mysticism may be more or less Christian depending on the extent to which it is connected with Jesus Christ. But to the degrees to which it has some relationship to Jesus Christ, we have a right to call a given mysticism Christian. No one has a monopoly on Jesus Christ. Therefore, nobody has a monopoly on Christian mysticism. It is not as if somebody could tell you: "This is Christian mysticism, but now you have crossed the line, and it is no longer Christian mysticism. You have passed out of it, you have fallen." We are not setting up a tidy box, but are establishing a relationship to a radiant center that radiates indefinitely. There may be areas that are just barely touched and dimly lit by this particular light, yet receive the full impact of another light. We can get twilight zones. If we speak about it in this way, we remain closer to actual reality than if we try to impose a more rigid definition.

If mysticism is Christian to the degree to which it is related to Jesus Christ and if our task is to speak about Christian mysticism, then obviously, we have to speak about Jesus Christ. Three aspects under which this topic relates to frontiers of consciousness evolution will be particularly important to us. One is the fact that mysticism as such is a frontier experience, as we have already discussed. The second is that Jesus Christ is a pioneer of consciousness. The third aspect will form the background to our investigations. It consists of the fact that biblical scholarship in the second half of the twentieth

century is passing a frontier with far-reaching consequences for Christian consciousness.

Biblical scholarship today has renounced the ambition to achieve a detailed biography of Jesus. The available data is simply insufficient to do so. But we can achieve something far more important: we can reconstruct quite reliably what kind of person Jesus was. There is considerable interest today in the Jesus before Christianity. The image that emerges shows us Jesus as a pioneer of human consciousness, and this precisely on the frontier of mysticism. The impact of Jesus can be understood as a new phase in the human "exploration into God." Moreover, his life's work and teaching stands and falls with mysticism. It hinges on "the experience of communion with God" Jesus' own and that of the people to whom his message is addressed.

We can get our teeth into this topic by asking



two basic questions about the Jesus before Christianity. *What* did he actually teach? And *how* did he teach? Let me anticipate the answers. (Scholars are practically unanimous on these two points.) The gist of Jesus' message is the proclamation of the Kingdom of God. And his most characteristic teaching method is in parables. But now we will have to unpack the content of these two succinct answers and see what trail Jesus blazed across frontiers of consciousness, allowing others to follow.

Mark, the earliest of our extant Gospels, summarized the teaching of Jesus in Chapter 1:15. He puts it all in a single verse so that you really get the gist. And this is what he says: "Jesus came . . . proclaiming the Good News from God and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, the Kingdom of God is at hand. Be converted and believe the Good News.'" "The time is fulfilled." That means "now." Do not wait for anything else. Now is the moment "The Kingdom of God is at

hand." At hand means right here. Here and now, that is the setting for the proclamation. This is the time, this is the place. do not look for anywhere else; do not wait for any other moment. This is it! (Now you are cornered.) And now comes the message: "Be converted and believe the Good News!"

If you look that up in your King James version, it will say "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." That is a very problematic translation for us today. Repentance means, for most of us, making up for what we have done wrong. And gospel means, for us today, the gospel book. So you get the idea that Jesus told us to make up for our sins

and then believe what is written in that book. Unfortunately, that is a widespread misunderstanding. And what a misunderstanding! What would be new about Jesus' message if that were what he meant? And what would be good about it? What Jesus is really saying is this: Here and now God's saving power has been made manifest. Put your trust in it and let it turn your whole life around!

The word Mark uses for conversion means a complete change of heart. It means a turning upside down of our habitual way of thinking and living. What, then, does Kingdom of God mean to warrant such a world-shaking response? The answer to this question leads us right back into the realm of mysticism and helps us understand how Jesus expanded the frontiers of consciousness. Biblical scholarship today is quite unanimous on the meaning of Kingdom of

God in the message of Jesus. It does not mean a place, a realm, like the British Empire. Nor does it mean a community all those who belong to Jesus as king. Nor does it mean God's reign or power in the abstract. On the contrary, it refers to the most concrete, experiential reality. Kingdom of God means for Jesus God's saving power made manifest.

When we understand the term Kingdom in the message of Jesus as "God's saving power made manifest," then we can readily see how relevant it is in our context of Christian mysticism. In our own experience, when do we experience "God's power" and "salvation"? If we understand these terms correctly, the answer will be: in our alive moments, in those mystic moments, about which we spoke already. How, then, do terms like "God's power" and "salvation" link up with our contemporary experience? We might prefer to avoid the term God. Today, it often causes confusion if you introduce this term. But on the

other hand, we are talking here in terms of Christian tradition, of Jewish tradition. That is why we must try to understand the terminology of that tradition.

When do we today experience what may be the equivalent to God's saving power? I would suggest that it is in those moments when we are "overpowered," as we say, by an overwhelming inrush of aliveness. Remember the examples I read to you from Eugene O'Neill and Mary Austin. Those were moments in which people were overpowered. And we too, if we remember similar moments, know that we were carried beyond the frontiers of our normal consciousness by a power, a *saving* power. Remember, it is like being

let out of a cage. A power beyond ourselves is freeing us, liberating us, pulling us out from drowning.

Normally, we focus narrowly on this life-saver model when we think about being saved. The basic idea is that you are in trouble and somebody pulls you out. Remember how many advertisements play on this particular concept of saving: You are in trouble, and we will save you. First we show you how you are in trouble, and then we will show you how you can be saved by our product. Even the dog faints when you take off your shoes! And then comes the deodorant that will save you. These are the two parts of every advertisement. First they show you *that* you need salvation; then they show you *how* you can be saved.

But that is not the only notion of saving. In fact it is one that we rarely use in everyday language.

More often we speak of saving money, saving energy, saving water, or the like. There is a different concept of saving behind this. You are not saving the water from drowning or money from being in trouble! Saving in this context means not wasting. But not wasting is only the negative aspect. The positive aspect is affirming the value of every penny, of every ounce of energy, every drop of water. And that aspect of saving is most important in our mystic experiences. Suddenly we are saved from alienation. (Remember alienation stands in our terminology today for all that we need to be saved from.) Suddenly we find our value affirmed. That is what saves us. We are at home. We are not orphans. We are not outcasts. We belong. Thus we experience, in our best moments, a saving power, a power that liberates us by affirming us.

We walk taller now that we are affirmed. We are more truly ourselves now that this saving power

has been made manifest to us in our experience. That is in itself a conversion, a turning, a thinking upside down. Most of the time we lie as if we were alienated, but now we know that we belong. And this manifestation calls us to further conversion. If we could live out, in every moment of our daily life, what we experience, what we are aware of in our mystical moments, that would be conversion. Life lived in that power would altogether change the world.

On the basis of this experience you can understand Jesus as a person who has experienced profound intimacy with God, a person who experienced communion with God's saving power. How he goes around and tells everybody, "Haven't you experienced that? It's a



reality here and now, this Kingdom of God, the manifestation of God's saving power. The time is fulfilled. The kingdom is at hand. Put your trust in that awareness; that is all you need to do. And, above all, live accordingly. That's conversion." But this Good News is too good to be true. That is why we do not live by it. Nor do we live by our own best experiences. We have them and an hour later we almost forget that sense of aliveness. We suppress it again. We doubt it. Maybe it was just an illusion. Our mystic awareness is too good to be true. We repress it. But Jesus says, "Don't forget it. This is reality. Live accordingly!" That message reverberates in so many ways throughout the whole New Testament.

And that is why Jesus teaches in parables. There is no other teacher in the history of religion who taught so predominantly in parables. Jesus taught

most typically in parables; not exclusively, but so much so that Mark can say that he taught *only* in parables. That he never taught in any other way except in parables is an exaggeration. But parable was the most typical way. That is why it is so important for us to understand what a parable is. It is a very simple teaching device. It can be a little story, it can be somewhat longer, or it can be just a very short saying like a proverb. The way some proverbs work gives us a good idea how a parable works. Take this one for example: "Early bird catches the worm." That is common sense. You can observe it if you get up early enough. Later on, most of the worms are gone. Late comers do not get any. You may have observed that many times, but it did not mean much to you. But then one day, you find yourself coming late to lunch at Esalen, and you do not get anything. Or maybe you go to a record shop and that new record is sold out. All of a sudden you remember that early bird catching a worm. Your situation has nothing to do with birds, nor

with worms, but it has a lot to do with the truth that lies behind the proverb.

That is the way a parable starts out. It reminds you of a common sense observation. Often it starts with, "Who of you does not know that?" Who of you who is a parent does not know how parents feel towards their children? Who of you who has ever baked bread does not know how yeast works? Who of you has ever lost something and does not know to what extent one goes to find it again? The "who of you" appeals to the audience and says, "Don't you all know this anyway?" This is part one of every parable. Who of you does

not know that the early bird catches the worm? Something as commonplace as that. Then comes part two. That is the response of the audience. The audience says, "Well, obviously, that's common sense. Isn't it?" And then comes part three, and that is, in the best examples, just silence. But sometimes it is spelled out, and it is the part in which Jesus says, "Ah, so it's common sense, okay. Well then why don't you act accordingly?" Whoops, now you are caught!

Let us look at an example to see how this teaching method of parable works. Most parables deal with the kingdom, but this one is told in answer to a question. The question is this: If I am supposed to love my neighbor as myself, *who* is my neighbor? We call this the parable of the good Samaritan. You have all heard it, I am sure. To call this parable the story of the good Samaritan is like telling a joke and giving it a

title that spoils the whole point of the joke. For the Jews at the time of Jesus, there was no such thing as a *good* Samaritan. The only good Samaritan was a *dead* Samaritan, as we would say today. The Samaritans were the absolutely bad ones. And besides, the story is not about the Samaritan. That is another problem. The story is about a man who fell among the robbers. (This is a handy rule of thumb: In parables, as in jokes, you always have to identify with the first person mentioned, otherwise you do not get the point. You may get something else out of it, as in the story of the "good" Samaritan. All sorts of good, interesting teachings have been based on it. But if you want to know what Jesus said, follow the rule for any folk tale, joke, or folksy saying; namely identify with the first person mentioned!)

Well, then, someone asks, "Who is my neighbor?" and Jesus tells this story. There was a man (that's you!), who went from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers. Between

Jerusalem and Jericho one can still fall among robbers today. The road leads through a steep canyon, and all sorts of things can happen to you there. So this man falls among robbers, who beat him and strip him. They steal whatever he has, and let him lie there half dead. It is very important that this man is only *half* dead. That means he is still half alive and can see what is going on. Remember, *you* are this man. Parables are not told from the helicopter perspectives, but through the eyes of the first person mentioned.

So you are lying there and somebody comes by. Suddenly you know who is your neighbor. Your heart cries out, "*This* is my

neighbor; he ought to help me!" But he walks by on the other side of the road and you lie there. Then somebody else comes by. Again you cry out, "Help me. I'm your neighbor!" But this one, too, walks by. You are still lying there hoping somebody will recognize you as a neighbor and act accordingly. Who comes by next but a Samaritan! Well, do you want this outcast to help you? Yes, of course, aren't we all neighbors? And, lo and behold, this dirty Samaritan does act neighborly. So Jesus asks, "Who showed himself your neighbor?" And the answer is, well, the one who helped me. Can you hear the silence that follows? In that silence Jesus is turning the tables on you. If he is your neighbor when *you* are in trouble, is he still your neighbor when *he* is in trouble?

I came across a wonderful contemporary version of that parable. When I told to a group in New

Zealand what I just now shared with you, a Josephite Sister in the audience said: "Wow, this happened to me. I was driving from Auckland to Hamilton not too long ago, and I got terribly tired. All of a sudden I find that my car is on the wrong side of the road. I stopped right there. I pulled over onto the curb (facing the wrong direction), and I said, 'I am going to sleep a little. Driving like this is too dangerous.'" She wakes up, and somebody is knocking on the window. Just waking up, she is totally confused and rolls down the window, contrary to all precautions. There is a man in a leather jacket, and he says, "Are you all right, dear? Move over, you are on the wrong side." In her confusion she moves over. He sits down, pulls her car in the right direction, and says, "You seem to be in pretty bad shape. Where are you going?" "Hamilton," she says. "We'll give you an escort." So this nun in her veil drives into Hamilton escorted by a motorcycle gang in leather.



Jesus proclaims the saving power of God made manifest among us, and he appeals to common sense. This common sense should really be written with capital "C." It is our *common* sense; we have it in common. And it has something to do with *sensing*. These are two very important aspects of Christian mysticism: emphasis on Community and emphasis on the senses. And both are contained in the notion of Common Sense.

It is to this common sense that Jesus always appeals. This fact is important in understanding Jesus and the mystic breakthrough that happened to him and through him. Ask yourself, to what authority did Jesus appeal? The answer is to common sense. When you go to

churches and hear sermons, you may get the impression that he appealed to God's authority like the prophets of old. But on closer examination, Jesus never uses the typical prophetic formula, "Thus says the Lord. . . ." He did not simply appeal to God's authority and least of all to his own authority. (People who do that have never much of a following. For that reason alone we can be sure that he did not do it.) He appealed to the divine authority in the hearts of his hearers, to Common Sense.

That is what gets Jesus into trouble; that is how the whole historical crisis in Jesus' life came about. Someone who appeals to common sense necessarily gets in trouble with the authorities. To both religious and political authorities, nobody is more suspect than persons who have learned to stand on their own two feet and empower others to do the same. That is Jesus.

And that is the mystics. The mystics continuously get in trouble with religious authorities, but often also with political authorities. By his teaching and by the very way he lives, Jesus drives a wedge between common sense and public opinion. He appeals to common sense and blows the pretense of public opinion to pieces. That is why Mark relates that common people said, "Wow, this man speaks with authority, not like our authorities." You can imagine how the authorities felt about it and how they reacted: "This man has to die!"

This is also the way the Gospels present it to us. Remember, we said that religion starts with mysticism and eventually hardens into doctrine, morals, and ritual. That is why in the gospels, you have Jesus somewhat schematically set over against three groups of the authorities: the scribes (who stand for doctrine), the lawyers (who stand for the law), and the pharisees (who stand for ritual). The gospels in themselves and

the rest of the New Testament show and we would know it even if they did not show it that there were excellent holy scribes and lawyers and pharisees. But they are turned into types, and these types still exist today. In every church you can meet the scribes, the lawyers, and the pharisees, and we find them within our own heart. They stand for the dead letter over against personal experience, for legalism over against action that springs from a live sense of belonging, for ritualism over against a celebration of life as a whole. But Jesus gets in trouble not only with the religious authorities but also with the political authorities. They

make common cause in the end and wipe him out. That is where the cross comes into the story of Jesus.

After the fact, we can interpret the cross in many ways as it has been interpreted by the Christian tradition. But you miss the point if you do not pay attention to how it came about historically. Jesus had to die because he broke through frontiers of consciousness, because he broke through frontiers of what it means to be religious. We better ask ourselves if we have the courage to stand up for common sense against public opinion. You run a frightening risk when you let yourself be caught by the parables. Once I say "yes" to common sense, why do I not live accordingly? Why do I not live with the aliveness of my best moments? Why do I make all these concessions to public opinion? Why do I not stand on the authority of God within me? Why

do I bow to the authorities? And there are many hidden authorities. Just think of peer pressure. There are all sorts of authorities to which we bow. And why? If you do not, you end up where Jesus ended up, on your own cross, inevitably.

That is the shattering end of the life of Jesus. This man still comes through so beautifully in some of the earliest writings as one of whom others could say, "Wow, this is what we would like to be if we were really ourselves." He lives out of those mystical moments, and we do not. We just have them once in a while, and then we betray them again. He lives out that reality. Therefore, he is wiped out. Dead. Historically that is the end of his story.

But then comes an event that is not in history and not out of history, an event that marks the edge of history; that event is called the resurrection. You cannot tell the story of Jesus fairly without referring to the resurrection. It is not merely an appendix. Without it, nothing that has happened

since and not even the picture that we have of Jesus, makes any sense. But what is that resurrection? How can we reconstruct what really happened?

Let us go back to the earliest report. The earliest report tells us that he dies on the cross. They take him down, they bury him hastily because it is the eve of the great feast, and soon after the feast women find the tomb empty. Women that was very embarrassing to the earliest church because women had no right to testify. Women had no voice in court. There was no such thing as a female witness. Yet, women were the first witnesses of the resurrection, and their testimony was accepted. That marks a change in the whole status

of women. They had (and still have) a long way to go, but from the beginning tradition knew that women were the first to find the tomb empty. And they believed that Jesus, whom they had seen dying and dead, was alive. That went far beyond any account that the tomb was empty. At the time, even those who said that his body had been stolen admitted that the tomb was empty.

Some people look now at this tomb, see it empty and say, "Well, he must have been stolen." Others see the same empty tomb and believe. They say: "Now we understand! Why should we seek the living one among the dead? This man was life personified. He showed us what it means to be alive. It stands to reason that he isn't here among the dead." And then comes the question: "Where is he, if he isn't here?" "He is hidden in God," says an early answer (Col. 3:3). God is also hidden. And yet, we experience the power of



God. Jesus is with God, hidden in God, and he continues to empower us with God's power. Thus, the shattered followers of Jesus came to realize that the kind of life he lived is stronger than death. And two thousand years later the world still reverberates from the shock wave of their faith in his resurrection.

What makes all this extremely exciting for us today is that we too are confronted with the empty tomb in an altogether new way. (Again, that is one of those frontiers we have broken through in this century.) How are we confronted with the empty tomb of Jesus? You may have heard about the so-called Shroud of Turin. That is a remarkable piece of historic evidence. It is a linen sheet about fourteen feet long that was used to enfold a corpse. The body was lying on half of the sheet, and the other half was folded over the body. This linen sheet bears some faint marks. With the naked eye you can just barely make out the imprint of a body. But when the

shroud was photographed for the first time at the beginning of our century, the negative showed a positive image. In other words, what you have on that sheet is a sort of negative. Its positive shows many details of the face and the body.

After careful study, several pathologists concluded that the image derives from the body of someone crucified in a manner identical to that recorded of Jesus in the Gospels. A few years ago, a team of scientists examined the shroud for several days and nights with the most modern methods. The verdict is that the image was not produced by any method known to us today. Some scientists ventured

the hypothesis that the image must have been produced by something like a miniature atomic blast emanating from the dead body before decay set in.

So there was a crucified body wrapped in this shroud, and then before decay set in, there was some sort of miniature atomic blast, and the body was gone. This is *our* version of the empty tomb. It is our confrontation with the question, "Where is he?" Obviously, he is not here. And just as with the empty tomb, two thousand years ago, there are those who say, "It must be a fraud." And there are those who look at the same evidence and believe. The evidence cannot prove his resurrection. At best it can trigger faith that the life this man lived and evoked in others is stronger than death. But that is a lot!

What Jesus proclaimed as the coming of God's Kingdom, the Church throughout the ages

proclaims as the Resurrection of Jesus the Christ. Both proclamations have the same content: God's saving power made manifest. There is the mystic core of the Christian religion, the volcanic eruption of a new beginning. And now the whole process begins all over again, inevitably. The encounter with Jesus is interpreted, and experience hardens into doctrine. The implications of Jesus' all-embracing love are formalized and harden into morals. They remember how he celebrated life when he ate with them and drank with them, and they turn this breaking of bread into ritual.

And so you have again and again the Christ-like figures within the church getting into the same troubles that Jesus got into with *his* religious authorities. And yet the Good News is handed on to us through the church, in the church, and in spite of the church. That is where you find all these saints who lived such Christ-like lives throughout the centuries up to our own time.

But you also find the pharisees, the lawyers, and the scribes in that same church. When we asked, "What is one who accepts being a mystic to do with religion?" my answer was, "You have the responsibility to make religion religious, because left to itself it will deteriorate into something that is irreligious." Now we ask, "What is a Christian to do who recognizes what Christ is all about?" And the answer is, "Well, spend the rest of your life making the Church Christian." It is called the church of saints and of sinners. It is also the church of the mystics and the church that gives mystics a hard time. That is where

we are. Let us be realistic. But at the heart of this church is the mystic element, which is what makes it tick, the very inheritance of Jesus. To penetrate to this mystical core is again and again the ultimate frontier experience of Christian mysticism.

## Chapter Eight

### Jesus, Evolution, and the Future of Humanity

*John White*

The human race is quickly coming to one of history's great dividesperhaps the most critical ever. It will be upon us by the end of the century. If we are to survive it, people must see that the situation is not simply political or sociological or cultural. It is biological.

All life on planet Earth is threatened with extinction from a number of sources. There is the threat of nuclear, biological and chemical warfare. There is the threat from pollution of the air, land and sea. There is the threat from wasting nonrenewable resources. There is the threat from drought and famine due to human interference with the ecosystem. If these are unchecked, even

the planet itself could end up as nothing more than another asteroid belt.

All of these threats are man-made. All of them originate in the minds of people. Our behavior is a manifestation of our thinking and emotions, and in turn our thoughts and feelings are dependent upon our state of consciousness. We recognize the threat to life that these forms of behavior contain, yet we persist stubbornly in our ways. Why? It is not that we lack the knowledge of what is threatening our existence. It is simply that the problem goes deeper than intellectual knowledge. Our present world situation is one in which we exhibit life-threatening irrational behavior. That in turn is due to what we might call "a crisis of consciousness."

If this is so, the solution can be stated very simply: *change consciousness*. Survival demands a change of consciousness. Not only survival, but also evolution. As I survey natural and cultural history,





I see increasingly complex forms of life coming into being in order to express more fully the consciousness behind creation itself. The grand theme of history is evolution, and it is a story of evermore refined forms of life emerging with ever-increasing degrees of consciousness.

Evolution is always at work. That means now, today. And what I see today, in addition to the threats to life, are signs that nature is mobilizing its resources to resist physical extinction in this part of the universe. It is mobilizing its resources for a quantum leap forward. The signs that point in this direction are many. Although the media tend to make them look like confusion, upheaval and strife, I see in them a deeper significance.

The growing restlessness among people as they search for new answers and new understanding is basically taking the form of exploring their own consciousness and that, to me, is a very healthy

sign indeed. Of course, these explorations often take a naive or violent pathway. The strident, angry voices of many so-called liberation groups are to be expected as the disenfranchised come to mature awareness. The mainstream of exploration, however, is an increasing interest in psychic and spiritual development. As I see it, this is an indication of a deep impulse to health which is working beneath the obvious symptoms of sickness in the body of humanity. And these approaches are being taken by young and old alike in the interest of expanding their consciousness. They are signs of a great awakening going on around the globe.

This great awakening is the way nature will resist man's irrational behavior. Nature will resist the extinction of life here by evolving lifeforms that know how to live sanely because their consciousness will have changed.

I call this *survivolution*. And I see it happening most dramatically at the human level. Many of

the events in the news today are, from my perspective, preliminary signs that a higher form of life is emerging, just as the Cro-Magnon people superceded the Neanderthal race.

What is coming to pass today, as you read about it in the news, is not a generation gap or a communication gap, as some media commentators say. Rather, it is a *species gap*. A new species is making its way onto the planet and in the face of a threatening dominant species is asserting its right to live. This inevitably brings it in

conflict with the dominant species. And that dominant species is a dying species.

Paleontologists tell us that during the age of dinosaurs, little tarsier-like creatures lived. They stayed small and under cover because the great lumbering dinosaurs would easily crush them to death otherwise. So in order to survive, they remained small and "on the fringe," so to speak. Then, when the dinosaurs died off, these small creatures emerged from cover into the open and began to grow, to evolve into primates in fact, into the first manlike creatures.

But evolution did not end there. And so when life reached the level of human development, one of the earlier races, the Neanderthal, was surpassed by the Cro-Magnon. This spelled doom for the Neanderthal. Cro-Magnon people were an evolutionary advance, a higher form of life. Their physique was taller and more massive. They had

superior tool-making ability and were the world's first artists, as their cave painting demonstrates. Altogether they showed a superior degree of consciousness.

I see the world scene in terms that parallel this. The chaos and confusion and social unrest around us are signs of what I choose to call "moral evolution." Sri Aurobindo described it as a journey toward perfection; Teilhard de Chardin spoke of noogenesis and a movement toward the Omega point. Whatever the name, there is a rising chorus of voices around the globe demanding widespread social reform—political, educational, nutritional, medical, ecological, judicial, economic, agricultural, religious. It essentially amounts to a call for cultural reformation—indeed, transformation—beyond all racial, national, ethnic, religious, sexual and caste concerns. All this and the greatly accelerated interest and exploration in psychotechnologies, spiritual disciplines and

sacred traditions are manifestations of a new, more intelligent species coming into existence and attempting to develop a unified planetary culture.

As such, the emerging species is meeting with resistance from the dominant species. It was ever thus. That is how evolution works. *Homo sapiens*, I think it accurate to say, is in stasis and is rapidly nearing the end of its life cycle. Everywhere we look in western society, at least institutions have become overgrown, outmoded and are breaking down. Culture is going into convulsions. Government, education, economics, religion, cities they are either exploding in

violence or grinding to a halt and becoming moribund, empty shells that no longer serve a vital purpose suited to the needs of people.

Biologically speaking, a dying species is a dangerous species. It is prone to go mad and to lash out in blind, massive fury that violently brings down its edifices upon it and anything else around. The new species can see this happening and, like the little creatures in the Age of Dinosaurs, has until lately remained under cover and on the fringes of a society that is entering its death throes.

But now the new breed is emerging from cover. As an historical epoch draws to a close, what can be seen around the planet is this: a mighty leap forward in survivolution is happening, and the result is a vast sorting-out process among people. Amid the confusion and upheaval, they are trying to discover what species they belong



to. The larger dimensions of this process are not recognized at present by most evolutionary forerunners, or else those dimensions are only dimly intuited by them. The process is still fragmented and leaderless an Aquarian conspiracy. And their numbers are still quite small in proportion to world population. Nevertheless, higher intelligence is working through them, calling them to self-recognition of their role in advancing the fabric of life.

Outwardly, of course, these mutant humans resemble the older form. The difference is inward, in their changed mentality, in their consciousness. The result, as I said, is a species gap.

Now, it can be terribly painful and anxiety-provoking to stand with one foot in the old world and one foot in the new. But the marvelous and hopeful thing is that nature, in its infinite wisdom, has given us the means to participate consciously in our own evolution.

We can become, in a sense, co-creators with the cosmos. We can systematically work on ourselves in a safe, reliable manner that can help us to make a quantum leap over the species gap.

That is what meditation and other spiritual disciplines are all about. The test of their value is whether they are in tune with the biological imperative to evolve, to advance the refinement and intensity of consciousness on Earth.

The perennial argument against utopia, against the development of the New Age, against the coming of the Kingdom, has been: human nature. We are forever flawed, the argument goes. But my reply is this: *human nature is changing*. There is an evolutionary advance taking place in the world today as a new and higher form

of humanity takes control of the planet. "Control," of course, means living in respectful recognition of intimate interdependence. It means living harmoniously with the planet and therefore surviving the coming global crises while the older species dies out from a massive overdose of irrationalism. Quite simply, the new breed is psychologically adapted to the altered conditions nature is imposing as it restores the balance that the *Homo sapiens* ignored for so long.

*Homo noeticus* is the name I give to the emerging form of humanity. Noetics is a term meaning the study of consciousness, and that activity is a primary characteristic of members of the new breed. Because of their deepened awareness and self-understanding, the traditionally imposed forms, controls and institutions of society are barriers to their full development. Their changed psychology is based

on expression of feeling, not suppression. Their motivation is cooperative and loving, not competitive and aggressive. Their logic is multilevel/integrated/simultaneous, not linear/sequential/either-or. Their sense of identity is embracing-collective, not isolated-individual. Their psychic abilities are used for benevolent and ethical purposes, not harmful and immoral ones. The conventional ways of society do not satisfy them. The search for new ways of living and new institutions concerns them. They seek a culture founded in higher consciousness, a culture whose institutions are based on love and wisdom, a culture that fulfills the perennial philosophy.

Although *Homo noeticus* is the name I give to the new form of humanity, to the offspring of man, there have been other names proposed, and certainly others before me have suggested the emergency of a higher humanity. Aurobindo, Teilhard de Chardin, Nietzsche and Gopi Krishna

are notable among them. Occult traditions such as Theosophy and Anthroposophy also state it explicitly. One of the most memorable statements of this view was given by R. M. Bucke on the last page of his classic *Cosmic Consciousness*:

. . . just as, long ago, self-consciousness appeared in the best specimens of our ancestral race in the prime of life, and gradually became more and more universal and appeared in the individual at an earlier and earlier age, until, as we see now, it has become almost universal and appears at the average of about three yearsso will Cosmic Consciousness become more and more universal earlier in the individual life

until the race at large will possess this faculty. The same race and not the same; for a Cosmic Conscious race will not be the race which exists today, any more than the present race of men is the same race which existed prior to the evolution of self-consciousness. The simple truth is, that there has lived on the earth, "appearing at intervals," for thousands of years among ordinary men, the first faint beginnings of another race; walking the earth and breathing the air with us, but at the same time walking another earth, and breathing another air of which we know little or nothing, but which is, all the same, our spiritual life, as its absence would be our spiritual death. This new race is in act of being born from us, and in the near future it will occupy and possess the earth.

For the majority of westerners, however, the most familiar term for this experience was given to it two millennia ago by Jesus of Nazareth.

When Jesus spoke of himself, why did he principally use the term "Son of Man?" Others called him the Son of God, but Jesus most often referred to himself as the Son of Man, the offspring of humanity. Moreover, he told those

around him that they would be higher than the angels and that those things which he did, they would do also, and greater (John 14:12).

The reason for this is that Jesus was aware of himself as a finished specimen of the new humanity which is to come the new humanity which is to inherit the earth, establish the Kingdom, usher in the New Age. His mission and his teaching have at their heart the development of a new and higher state of consciousness *on a specieswide basis* rather than the sporadic basis seen earlier in history when an occasional adept or avatar such as Buddha or Krishna appeared. His unique place in history is based upon his unprecedented realization of the higher intelligence, the divinity, the Ground of Being incarnated in him the ground which is the source of all Becoming.

The Aramaic term for the Greek word "Christ" is *M'skekha*, from which we get "messiah." It is a title, not a last name, and although it is

conventionally translated as "anointed," it really means "perfected" or "enlightened" or "the ideal form of humanity." Thus, Jesus was an historical person, a human becoming; but Christ, the Christos, is an eternal transpersonal condition of being to which we



must all someday come. Jesus did not say that this higher state of consciousness realized in him was his alone for all time. Nor did he call us to worship him. Rather, he called us to *follow* him, to follow in his steps, to learn from him, from his example, to live a God-centered life of selfless compassionate service to the world *as if we were Jesus himself*. He called us to share in the new condition, to enter a new world to be one in the supramental Christ consciousness which alone can dispel the darkness of our minds and renew our lives. He did not call us to be Christians; he called us to be Christed. In short, Jesus aimed at *duplicating* himself by fostering the development of *many* Jesuses. He aimed, as the New Testament declares, to make all one in Christ. And who is Christ? St. Paul tells us that Christ is the Second Adam, the founder of a new race.

The Kingdom is within us. Divinity is our birthright, our inheritance, nearer to us than hand and foot, but the eye will not see and the ear will not hear. Jesus called people to awaken, to change their ways, to repent. The very first words he spoke to humanity in his public ministry were, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel." (Mark 1:14, Matthew 4:17) This is his central teaching and commandment.

But notice that word: repent. Over the centuries it has become misunderstood and mistranslated, so that today people think it merely means feeling sorry for their sins. This is an unfortunate debasement of Jesus' teaching. The Aramaic word that Jesus used is *tob*, meaning "to return," "to flow back into God." The sense of this concept comes through best in the Greek word first used to translate it. That word is *metanoia* and, like *tob*, it means something far greater than merely feeling sorry for misbehavior. Metanoia

has two etymological roots. Meta means "to go beyond," "to go higher than." And noia comes from *nous*, meaning "mind." It is the same root from which Teilhard de Chardin developed his term, *noosphere*, and from which the word *noetic* comes. So the original meaning of metanoia is literally "going beyond or higher than the ordinary mental state." In modern terms, it means transcending self-centered ego and becoming God-centered.

This is the central experience Jesus sought for all people. This is the heart of Jesus' life and teaching, although it is now largely absent from the institutional Christian churches. Metanoia indicates a change of mind and behavior based on radical insight into the cause and

effect of one's previous actionsinsight arising from entry into a condition beyond the realm of time, space and causality. Metanoia is that profound state of consciousness which mystical experience aims atthe state in which we transcend or dissolve all the barriers of ego and selfishness that separate us from God. It is the "summun bonum" of human life. It is the state of *direct knowing, immediate perception* of our total unity with God. St. Paul said it very simply: the renewing of your mind in Christ.

In its best sense, then, metanoia means a radical conversion experience, a transformation of self based on a new state of awareness, a new state of consciousnesshigher consciousness. It means repentance in its most fundamental dimensionthat of "a turning about in the deepest seat of consciousness," as Lama Govinda phrases it. That turning-about is for the purpose of

rebinding or re-tying ourselves to the divine source of our beingthe source we have lost awareness of. That is what religion is all about. *Re ligare*: to tie back, to tie again. That is true repentancewhen we "get religion" in the sense of becoming aware of our inescapable ties to God, the creator, preserver and redeemer of the cosmos.

When we are rebound to God, the true meaning of sin becomes apparent. Sin means literally "missing the mark." Sin is not merely misbehavior. It is transgression of divine law or cosmic principle. It is a failure to be centered in Godto be "off target." Religion, then, is in its truest sense *an instrument for awakening us to the evolutionary process of growth to godhood*, which is the aim of all cosmic becoming. When we are guilty of sin, we are fundamentally missing the mark by failing to be God-conscious and all that it means for our behavior and thought.

Thus, the world is indeed in sin, but there is no remedy for it except to change consciousness. For in truth, God does not condemn us for our sins; rather, we condemn ourselves *by* our sins. And thus forgiveness by God is not necessary; it is there always, as unconditional love, the instant we turn in our hearts to God. As *A Course in Miracles* puts it, forgiveness must be offered *from ourselves to the world* for all the offenses, real or imaginary, we have stored in our hearts with rancor, bitterness and longing for revenge. *That* is the turning point; that is when ego transcendence truly begins and the glory of God starts to be revealed. To understand all is to forgive all. God understands all and forgives all and loves all. Love is

therefore the greatest "revenge" we can seek against enemies and those who treat us spitefully and wrongly. Is that not precisely what Jesus taught?

There will never be a better world until there are better people in it, and the means for attaining that are democratically available to everyone through the grace and unconditional eternal love of God. If that grace and love were to be withdrawn for even an instant, the entire cosmos would be annihilated. To become aware of that fact is no easy task. But there is no substitute for growth to higher consciousness: recognition that all is God and there is only God. The metanoia process, when completed, results in a state of awareness that Jesus himself had when he said: "I and the Father are one."

That is what Jesus taught and demonstrated cosmic consciousness, the Christic

state of mind, the peace that passeth understanding, the direct experience of divinity dwelling in us and all things, now and forever, creating us, living us, preserving us, urging us on to ever more inclusive states of being so that "he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do, and greater than these shall he do." (John 14:12)

The institutional Christian churches tell us that Jesus was the only Son of God, that he incarnated as a human in order to die on the cross as a penalty for our sins, and thereby save the world. But that is a sad caricature, a pale reflection of the true story. It turns Jesus into a magical fairy tale hero and Christianity into a cult of personality. The significance of incarnation and resurrection is not that Jesus was a human like us but rather that *we are gods like him* or at least have the potential to be. This is the secret of all ages and all spiritual traditions. This is the highest mystery. The Christian tradition, rightly



understood, seeks to have us all become Jesuses, one in Christ beyond all the darkness of mind that results in the evil and suffering so widespread in the world. Jesus himself pointed out this is what the Judaic tradition, which he fulfilled, is all about when he said, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods'?" (John 10:34).

Jesus showed us the way. He demonstrated in his life and explained in his teaching that we all have the potential the God-given right to enter the Kingdom, to be healed of our sense of separation and alienation, to overcome sin and fear of death all of which are rooted in the egoic self-sense and to become whole and holy. We all have this potential, given not by "my" Father but, as the Lord's Prayer

says, by *our* Father. Jesus showed in his life, his death and his resurrection that we are eternal celestial beings whose home is the universe. He showed that heaven is a present reality, not a future reward. He showed that the death of the body is not the destruction of our consciousness, that the Christ consciousness which embodied itself in the man Jesus transcends the known facts of physics and biology, and actually controls conventionally understood physics and biology. He showed that the Christ consciousness was, is and ever shall be present among us, faithfully calling us to reunion, world without end, for it is the source of all creation. So rather than saying that Jesus was the Christ, it is more accurate to say: the Christ was Jesus.

The significance of Jesus, therefore, is not as a vehicle of salvation but as a *model of perfection*, which we must seek to become. This is why the

proper attitude toward him is one of reverence, not worship. Jesus showed us the way to a higher state of being and called upon us to realize it, to make it real, actual individually and as the race. This is the true meaning of being born again dying to the past and the old sense of self through a change of consciousness. To enter the Kingdom we must die and be born again, we must become as a little child. From the perspective of metanoia, the meaning of Jesus' injunction is clear. To re-enter the state of innocence that infants exhibit, we do not merely regress to an infantile level, forsaking our mature faculties. Instead, we *progress* through transcendence of the illusion of ego and all its false values, attitudes and habits. We enter a guileless state of mind without forsaking the better qualities of adulthood. We optimize, rather than maximize, childhood, becoming childlike, not childish. Superficial values and capriciousness are outgrown, so that we function in the service of a transcendent purpose, offering our life's work to

God moment-to-moment rather than seeking self-glorification and some consoling distant reward in this world or the next. We discover that heaven and hell are not remote places; they are states of consciousness. Heaven is union with God, hell is separation from God, and the difference is not measured in miles but in surrender of ego and self-centeredness.

Jesus showed us the way to the Kingdom, but he will not indeed, cannot magically take anyone there. That depends on your own effort. And even then, the timing is unknown. God's grace is still the final factor in crossing the planes of consciousness. Nevertheless,

the effort should be made, *must* be made. Like the climber who went up Mt. Everest simply because it was there, sooner or later every human being will feel a call from the cosmos to ascend to godhead. That is our historical love affair with the divine. And as Jesus said, if you ask for bread, you will not be given stones. Knock and it shall be opened unto you.

There is no way to enter the Kingdom except to ascend in consciousness to the Father. That is what the Christian tradition and, indeed, every true religion is all about: a system of teachings (both theory and practice) about growth to higher consciousness. That is the key to the Kingdom. But this, by and large, has been lost to the understanding of contemporary Christendom. Instead, Jesus and the Bible are idolized, and heaven is said to be located somewhere in outer space. Awareness of inner space of consciousness

and the need to cultivate it is sadly lacking.

The original form of baptism, for example, was apparently an initiatory practice in which the person a convert who would have been an adult prepared through study of spiritual disciplines was held under water to the point of nearly drowning. This near-death experience was likely to induce an out-of-body projection such as many near-death experiencers report today. The baptized person would thereby directly experience resurrection, the transcendence of death, the reality of metaphysical worlds and the supremacy of Spirit. He would receive a dramatic and unmistakable demonstration of the reality of the spiritual body or celestial body that St. Paul speaks of (apparently referring to his own personal experience with out-of-body projection) in I Corinthians 15:40-44. The degenerate forms of baptism practiced today even those involving bodily immersion are tragic debasements of the original purpose and meaning

of baptism in the Judeo-Christian tradition. (However, I am not implicitly advocating a return to it because much safer, less riskier methods of inducing out-of-body projection are available today. The present symbolic use of baptism is justifiable if it is supplemented with necessary understanding of its true but esoteric significance.)

Matthew 11:29-30 suggests other spiritual practices which Jesus taught to his disciples and an inner circle: "Take my yoke upon you . . . my yoke is easy." The word "yoke" is conventionally understood to mean "burden" or "work." However, it is better understood in the sense of Sanskrit *yug*, meaning "to yoke or join." It is the root

from which "yoga" comes, and yoga is a system of spiritual practices designed to accelerate personal growth and development, physically, mentally and spiritually, so that the yogi attains union with the Divine. That yoking with God was precisely the aim of Jesus' teaching. Thus, esoteric Christianity understands the verses to mean "the practices I prescribe for growth to Christ consciousness."

So long as people believe in an unbridgable gulf between themselves and that which Jesus demonstrated, Christianity will not have accomplished its mission. So long as the focus of attention remains on a naive, romanticized image of the historical person Jesus rather than on his transpersonal Christic demonstration of how to bridge the gulf between God and humanity, Christianity will not have carried out its founder's intent. "Building bridges" that should



be the main thrust of Christianity. Interestingly, this is explicitly acknowledged in the Roman Catholic tradition because its supreme authority, the Pope, is technically termed the Pontifex Maximus, which is Latin for "supreme bridgemaker." Again, however, the keepers of this tradition have not retained understanding of that which they retain.

At present, Christianity tends to demand blind faith, rote words and mechanical behavior. This leaves people empty and unfulfilled. But the cosmic calling we humans have will not be denied forever, despite the ignorance of religious institutions. The Holy Spirit, the life force, will simply move on to new forms, leaving fossils behind.

But if the human potential that Jesus demonstrated is understood to be within us, if the capacity to grow to godlike stature is directly experienced by all Christendom as the key to the Kingdom, then Christianity will fulfill its

purpose by encouraging people to evolve, to transform themselves, to rise to a higher state. For we are not simply human beings. We are also human becomings, standing between two worlds, two ages. The marvelous thing about us as nature-becoming-aware-of-itself-as-God is that each of us has the latent ability to take conscious control of our own evolution, to build our own bridge, and thereby become a member of the new age, the new humanity. As St. John recorded the words of Jesus during his visionary experience on Patmos, "Behold, I make all things new." (Rev 21:5)

In the course of this change, there are stages that can be presented in a simple formulation: From orthonoia to metanoia through par-

anoia. We grow from orthonoia that is, the common, everyday state of ego-centered mind to metanoia only by going through paranoia, a state in which the mind is deranged (that is, taken apart) and rearranged through spiritual discipline so that a clear perception of reality might be experienced. Conventional western psychologies regard paranoia as a pathological breakdown. It often is, of course, but seen from this perspective, it is not necessarily always so. Rather, it can be breakthrough not the final breakthrough, to be sure, but a necessary stage of development on the way to realizing the Kingdom.

Paranoia is a condition well-understood by mystical and sacred traditions. The spiritual disciplines that people practice under the guidance of a guru or master are designed to ease and quicken the passage through paranoia so that

the practitioner does not get lost in the labyrinth of inner space and become a casualty.

Because metanoia has by and large not been experienced by the founders of western psychology and psychotherapy, paranoia has not been fully understood in our culture. It is seen as an aberrated dead end rather than a necessary precondition to higher consciousness. It is not understood that the confusion, discomfort and suffering experienced in paranoia are due entirely to the destruction of an illusion, ego. The less we cling to that illusion, the less we suffer.

The world's great spiritual systems, however, understand the psychology of this situation very well, and have developed procedures for curing it by disburdening people of their false self-image, their false identity. It is no accident that society's models of the ideal human being include many saints and holy people. These self-transcendent, God-realized individuals have been revered for many reasons: their compassion, devotion and

serenity, their inspirational words of wisdom, their virtuous service to the world. What has been their motivation? Each of them, in his own way arising from his particular culture or tradition, has discovered the secret of the ages, the truth of the saying, "Let go and let God." When the ego-sense is relaxed, when a sense of the infinite and eternal replaces our usual narrow self-centeredness with all its passing, unsatisfying fantasies, there is no longer a mental basis for fear, hatred, anxiety, anger, attachment, desire. Instead, the perfectly harmonious functioning of the cosmos operates through us and the cosmos is always in balance, always at peace with itself.

The Christian message is essentially a call to be universal—a call to become cosmically conscious. It is a call to place God at the center of ourselves, not through blind faith but through insightful awareness, not through rigid adherence to ritual and dogma but through graceful expression of cosmic principles. It is a call to "be as gods."

Thus, Jesus could speak of what is called "the Second Coming" as the end of the age, the end of history, the end of the world. Waking up from the illusion of ego, from the dream of worldly life, into God-conscious reality does indeed end the world. It ends the world not as global destruction but as transcendence of time, space and causality. Thus also, those Christian preachers who are predicting Armageddon and the end of the world soon may be right because our culture is indeed critically close to global holocaust—but if they should prove to be right,

they will be right for the wrong reasons.

For in the deepest sense, there is no Second Coming at all. The Bible does not speak of "two" comings. Aramaic scholar Dr. Rocco Errico, points out the actual meaning of the phrase is "the coming of Christ." This is confirmed by the passage in Matthew that reports Christ never left humanity: "Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28:20)

Thus, the final appearance or coming of Christ will be a *worldwide spiritual* appearance, free from all physical limitations. Errico writes, "At that time, the consciousness of mankind will have been raised to a spiritual level so that every eye will see nothing but good. Man will realize the spiritual life and kingdom, and at the coming of the Christ, the whole world will recognize him. His kingdom will be established and the world will be ready to receive him."

Today the world stands critically close to global

holocaust. But a problem cannot be solved at the level that generated it. The solution to the problem of history, therefore, will not be found within history—that is, within the state of consciousness which generated history and the nightmare of contemporary world affairs. It is ego which generates time, temptation and trouble.

The answer to this emergency is emergence. The only way out of history into the Kingdom of God, the only way out of our precarious world situation into a New Age is a change of consciousness, a transcendence of the false sense of self from which all destructive human behavior arises. Only metanoia—the emergence of Christ-in-us—can provide the means whereby reality is seen clearly and an



enlightened global culture is possible. And that is precisely what is happening right now.

The Son of Man showed us the way to that higher state of being the same beckoning evolutionary advance that other enlightened teachers of humanity have shown us at other times and places. I do not mean to present Jesus as the sole path to cosmic consciousness. That would be further debasement of his teaching. We have also been taught by Buddha and Krishna, by Lao Tsu and Moses, Mohammed, Rama, Zoroaster, Quetzalcoatl, Guru Nanak, Mahavira. The human race has been guided by many other evolutionary forerunners who have given us the world's religions, sacred traditions, spiritual paths, metaphysical philosophies and occult mystery schools. They have differed in various emphases and in cultural orientations, but the core truth of them all is the same: *Thou shalt evolve to a*

*higher state of being and ultimately return to the Godhead which is your very self, your ever-present Divine Condition prior to all conditions, names and forms.*

We have the teachings and prophecies from these channels of truth. We have the technical instruction in their holy scriptures. We have information of the most advanced sort from many equally valuable sources, but we have not put it into practice.

This hardness of heart, this resistance to the evolutionary urge, has brought us to what I see as the most critical juncture in our history. The name of the game is survivolution, but no one is guaranteed a place in the Kingdom within the space of a lifetime, at least. Nature can be pitiless with regard to the individual. Floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tidal waves, tornadoes, hurricanes, drought, pestilence and famine are no respecters of person or place. It is the species that counts. That is the way evolution

works. Many trials and tribulations are ahead for us as we learn to play the cosmic game of evolving in consciousness. There will be many casualties among those who are slow to adapt in these accelerated-learning times. It has always been that way. The species that does not learn to adapt to new conditions goes the way of the dinosaur. But what comes afterward has always been an evolutionary advance.

If Planet Earth should end up as just a blinding flash in the night sky, or as a sterile piece of rock, from the cosmic point of view it will be the loss of just one lifebearing planet circling a minor star in a middle-sized galaxy among the billions of galaxies just an

evolutionary experiment that failed. There are billions of other worlds where evolution of intelligent lifeforms is probably going on. That terminal flash for the earth can happen, but it need not. The source of our being is calling to us through innumerable forms and channels through nature and through enlightened teachers calling us to awaken to our true identity and to carry that knowledge forward in the emergence of a higher form of life. Salvation, *liberation or enlightenment* is possible for us at every moment and that is the key to avoiding species suicide and to transforming, rather than destroying, the earth.

But the choice is always ours. We can listen to nature in its many forms and learn or we can shut ourselves off from the information and warnings that the cosmos is always giving us. Nature may be pitiless, but it is not unloving. Like a stern but

compassionate parent who wants its children to grow up wise and strong, nature gives us hard lessons. But they are always intended for our benefit.

We live in a benevolent universe that nourishes us far better than most realize. But real learning can take place only in a condition of freedom. School is nearly out for *Homo sapiens*. If we survive the coming holocausts, it will surely be a better world, a New Age. And we *can* survive. We are free to survive and evolve. Nature wants us to survive and evolve. But the choice is always ours.

## Chapter Nine

### The Buddhist Path and Social Responsibility

*Jack Kornfield, Ph.D.*

One of the most important questions we come to in spiritual practice is how to reconcile service and responsible action in the world with a meditative life based on nonattachment, letting go, and coming to understand the ultimate emptiness of all conditioned things. Do the values that lead us to actively give, serve, and care for one another differ from the values that lead us deep within ourselves on a journey of liberation and awakening? To consider this question, we must first learn to distinguish among four qualities central to spiritual practice: *love, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity* and what might be called their "near

enemies." Near enemies may seem to be very close to these qualities and may even be mistaken for them, but they are not fundamentally alike.

The near enemy of love is attachment.

Attachment masquerades as love. It says, "I love this person as long as he or she doesn't change. I'll love you if you'll love me back. I'll love that if it will be the way I want it." This isn't love at all; it is attachment, and attachment is very different from love. Love allows, honors, and appreciates; attachment grasps, demands, needs, and aims to possess. Attachment offers love only to certain people; it is exclusive. Love, in the sense that the Buddha used the word *metta* is a universal, nondiscriminating feeling of caring and connectedness, even toward those whom we may not approve of or like. We may not condone their behavior, but we cultivate forgiveness. Love is a powerful tool that transforms any situation. It is not passive acquiescence. As the Buddha said, "Hatred never ceases through hatred. Hatred only

ceases



through love." Love embraces all beings without exception, and discards ill will.

One near enemy of compassion is pity. Instead of feeling the openness of compassion, pity says, "Oh, that poor person is suffering!" Pity sets up a separation between oneself and others, a sense of distance and remoteness from the suffering of others that is affirming and gratifying to the ego. Compassion, on the other hand, recognizes the suffering of another as a reflection of one's own pain: "I understand that; I suffer in the same way. It's a part of life." Compassion is shared suffering.

Another near enemy of compassion is grief. Compassion is not grief. It is not an immersion in or identification with the suffering of others that leads to an anguished reaction. Compassion is the tender readiness of the heart to respond to one's own or another's pain without grief or

resentment or aversion. It is the wish to dissipate suffering. Compassion embraces those experiencing sorrow, and eliminates cruelty from the mind.

The third quality, sympathetic joy, is the ability to feel joy in the happiness of others. The near enemy of this state is comparison our need to conclude that we are superior to, inferior to, or even equal to someone else. This need to assess ourselves in relation to someone else's experience, or to look for affirmation in relation to someone else's life is a source of pain and delusion in the mind. Sympathetic joy is the source of great personal happiness; it embraces those enjoying happiness and discards dislike and jealousy.

The near enemy of equanimity is unintelligent indifference or callousness. We appear serene if we say, "I'm not attached. I don't care what happens anyway because it's all transitory." We feel a certain peaceful relief because we

withdraw from experience and from the energies of life. But true equanimity is not a withdrawal; it is a balanced engagement with all aspects of life. It is opening to the whole of life with composure and with balance of mind, seeing the nature of all things. Equanimity embraces the loved and the unloved, the agreeable and the disagreeable, and pleasure and pain; it eliminates clinging and aversion.

Although everything is empty, we nevertheless honor the reality of form. As Zen Master Dogen says: "Flowers fall with our attachment, and weeds spring up with our aversion." Knowing deeply that all

will change that the world of conditioned phenomena is insubstantial, we are fully present and in harmony with it.

Attachment, pity, comparison, and indifference are all ways of backing away from life out of fear. Spirituality is not a removal or escape from life. It is seeing the world with a deeper vision that is not self-centered, a vision that sees through dualistic views to the underlying interconnectedness of all of life. It is the discovery of freedom in the very midst of our bodies and minds.

In the Eightfold Path the Buddha talks about Right Thought or Right Aspiration, which has three aspects. The first is cultivating thoughts that are free from desire, discarding transitory experience, and developing a sense of inner contentment. The second is cultivating thoughts free from ill will and resentment; this means

cultivating thoughts of compassion and gentleness. The third is cultivating thoughts free from cruelty; this means nourishing the forces of kindness and active love within us. With a sense of Right Aspiration we can use all the different situations we face as stepping stones. This is the thread that unites all the moments of our lives. Each moment becomes an opportunity.

While in India, I spoke with Vimala Thaker about the question of meditation and activity in the world. Vimala had worked for many years in rural development and land redistribution projects when, as a result of her longtime interest in Krishnamurti's teachings, she began to teach meditation and devoted many years to this. She has recently returned to development work and to helping the hungry and homeless, teaching much less than she once had. I asked her why she decided to go back to the type of work she had been doing years before. She replied: "Sir, I am a lover of life, and as a lover of life, I cannot keep

out of any activity of life. If there are people who are hungry for food, my response is to help feed them. If there are people who are hungry for truth, my response is to help them discover it. I make no distinction."

The Sufis have a saying, "Praise Allah, and tie your camel to the post." Pray, but also make sure you do what is necessary in the world. Meditate, but manifest your understanding of this spiritual experience. Balance your realization of emptiness with a sense of compassion and impeccability to guide your life.

Seeing emptiness means seeing that all of life is like a bubble in a rushing stream, a play of light and shadow, a dream. It means

understanding that this tiny planet hangs in the immensity of space amidst millions and billions of stars and galaxies, that all of human history is like one second compared to the billions of years of earth's history, and that it will all be over very soon and no one is really going anywhere. This context helps us to let go amidst the seeming seriousness of our problems, and to enter life with a sense of lightness and ease. Impeccability means that we must realize how precious life is, even though it is transient and ephemeral, and how each of our actions and words affect all beings around us in a most profound way. There is nothing inconsequential in this universe, and we need to respect this fact personally and act responsibly in accordance with it.

One could make a very convincing case for simply devoting oneself to meditation. Does the world need more medicine and energy and

buildings and food? Not really. There are enough resources for all of us. There is starvation and poverty and disease because of ignorance, prejudice, and fear, because we hoard materials and create wars over imaginary geographic boundaries and act as if one group of people is truly different from another group somewhere else on the planet. What the world needs is not more oil, but more love and generosity, more kindness and understanding. The most fundamental thing we can do to help this war-torn and suffering world is to genuinely free ourselves from the greed and fear and divisive views in our own minds, and then help others to do the same. Thus, a spiritual life is not a privilege; it is a basic responsibility.

But there is also a convincing argument for devoting oneself entirely to service in the world. I have only to mention the recent horror of Cambodia, the violence in Central America, the starvation in Africa situations in which the



enormity of suffering is almost beyond comprehension. In India alone, 350 million people live in such poverty that one day's work pays for only one meal. I once met a man in Calcutta who was sixty-four years old and pulled a rickshaw for a living. He had been doing it for forty years and had ten people dependent on him for income. He had gotten sick the year before for ten days; within a week money ran out and they had nothing to eat. How can we possibly let this happen? Forty children per minute die from starvation while twenty five million dollars per minute are spent on arms. We must respond. We cannot hold back or look away. We have painful dilemmas to face. Where should we

put our energy? If we decide to meditate, even choosing which type of meditation to practice can be confusing.

The starting point is to look directly at suffering, both the suffering in the world and the suffering in our own hearts and minds. This is the beginning of the teaching of the Buddha, and the beginning of our own understanding of the problem of world peace. At this moment on our planet, there are hundreds of millions of people who are starving or malnourished. Hundreds of millions of people are so impoverished that they have little or no shelter and clothing, or they are sick with diseases that we know how to cure, but they cannot afford the medicine or do not have access to it.

For us to look directly at the situation is not a question of ceremony or of religion. We have a mandate to look in a very deep way at the sorrow

and suffering that exists now in our world, and to look at our individual and collective relationship to it, to bear witness to it, to acknowledge it instead of running away. The suffering is so great that we do not want to look. We close our minds. We close our eyes and hearts.

Opening ourselves to all aspects of experience is what is asked of us if we want to do something, if we want to make a change, if we want to make a difference. We must look at the world honestly, unflinchingly, and directly, and then look at ourselves and see that sorrow is not just out there, external, but it is also within ourselves. It is our own fear, prejudice, hatred, desire, neurosis, and anxiety. It is our own sorrow. We have to look at it and not run away from it. In opening ourselves to suffering, we discover that we can connect with and listen to our own hearts.

In the heart of each of us, a great potential exists for realizing truth, for experiencing wholeness, for going beyond the shell of the ego. The

problem is that we become so busy and lost in our own thinking that we lose our connection with our own true nature. If we look deeply, we discover that the wholeness of our being comes to know and express itself both through meditation and through sharing ourselves with others, and the course to take is very clear and immediate. Whether it is an *inner* or an *outer* path, it has enormous power to affect the world.

I spend most of my time teaching meditation. A few years ago, when many thousands of Cambodian people were fleeing the violence in their homeland only to face starvation and disease in refugee

camps in Thailand, something in me said, "I've got to go there," and so I went. I knew the people and a few of the local languages. After being there for a short time, trying to assist, I returned to this country to guide intensive meditation retreats. I did not deliberate much at the time about whether or not I should go to work in the refugee camps. I felt that it had to be done, and I went and did it. It was immediate and personal.

The spiritual path does not present us with a stylized pat formula for everyone to follow. It is not a matter of imitation. We can not be Mother Theresa or Gandhi or the Buddha. We have to be ourselves. We must discover and connect with our unique expression of the truth. We must learn to listen to and trust ourselves.

There are two great forces in the world. One is the force of killing. People who are not afraid to kill govern nations, make wars, and control much

of the activity of our world. There is great strength in not being afraid to kill. The other source of strength in the worldthe real strengthis in people who are not afraid to die. These are people who have touched the very source of their being, who have looked into themselves in such a deep way that they understand and acknowledge and accept death, and in a way, have already died. They have seen beyond the separateness of the ego's shell, and they bring to life the fearlessness and the caring born of love and truth. This is a force that can meet the force of someone who is not afraid to kill.

This is the power Gandhi called *satyagraha*, the force of truth, and the force that he demonstrated in his own life. When India was partitioned, millions of people became refugeesMuslims and Hindus moved from one country to another. There was horrible violence and rioting. Tens of thousands of troops were sent to West Pakistan to try to quell the terrible violence, while Gandhi

went to what was then East Pakistan. He walked from village to village asking people to stop the bloodshed. Then he fasted. He said he would take no more food until the violence and insanity stopped, even if it meant his own death. And the riots stopped. They stopped because of the power of love, because Gandhi cared about somethingcall it truth or life or whatever you wishit was something much greater than Gandhi the person. This is the nature of our spiritual practice, whatever form it may take. Living aligned with truth is more important than either living or dying. This understanding is the source

of incredible power and energy, and must be manifested through *love, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity*.

One of the exquisite experiences of my travels in India was going to the holy city of Benares by the Ganges River. Along the river bank are ghats where people bathe as a purification, and there are also ghats where people bring corpses to be cremated. I had heard about the burning ghats for years and had always thought that being there would be a heavy experience. I was rowed down river in a little boat, and up to the ghats where there were twelve fires going. Every half-hour or so, a new body would be carried down to the fires as people chanted "Rama Nama Satya hei," the only truth is the name of God. I was surprised. It was not dreadful at all; it was peaceful, quiet, and very sane. There was as a recognition that life and death are part of the



same process and therefore death need not be feared.

There is a deep joy that comes when we stop denying the painful aspects of life, and instead allow our hearts to open to and accept the full range of our experience: life and death, pleasure and pain, darkness and light. Even in the face of the tremendous suffering in the world, there can be this joy, which comes not from rejecting pain and seeking pleasure, but rather from our ability to meditate and open ourselves to the truth. Spiritual practice begins by allowing ourselves to face our own sadness, fear, anxiety, desperation to die to the ego's ideas about how things should be, and to love and accept the truth of things as they are.

With this as our foundation, we can see the source of suffering in our lives and in the world around us. We can see the factors of greed, hatred, and ignorance that produce a sense of separation. If we look directly, we can see the

end of suffering because its end is an acknowledgement and a clear understanding of the oneness of light and dark, up and down, sorrow and joy. We can see all these things without attachment and without separation.

We must look at how we have created and enforced separation. How have we made this a world of "I want this; I want to become that; this will make me safe; this will make me powerful?" Race, nationality, age, and religion all enforce separation. Look into yourself and see what is "us" and what is "them" for you. When there is a sense of "us," then there is a sense of "other." When we can give this up, then we can give up the idea that strength comes from

having more than others, or from having the power to kill others. When we give this up, we give up the stereotype of love as a weakness.

There is a story from the Zen tradition about an old monk in China who practiced very hard meditation for many years. He had a good mind and became very quiet, but never really touched the end of "I" and "others" in himself. He never came to the source of complete stillness or peace out of which transformation comes. So he went to the Zen Master and said, "May I please have permission to go off and practice in the mountains? I have worked for years as a monk and there is nothing else I want but to understand this: the true nature of myself, of this world." And the master, knowing that he was ripe, gave him permission to leave.

He left the monastery, took his bowl and a few possessions, and walked through various towns

toward the mountains. He had left the last village behind and was going up a little trail when there appeared before him, coming down the trail, an old man carrying a great big bundle on his back. This old man was actually the Bodhisattva, Manjusri, who is said to appear to people at the moment that they are ripe for awakening, and is depicted carrying the sword of discriminating wisdom that cuts through all attachment, all illusion, and separateness. The monk looked at the old man, and the old man said, "Say, friend, where are you going?" The monk told his story. "I've practiced for all these years and all I want now is to touch that center point, to know that which is essentially true. Tell me, old man, do you know anything of this enlightenment?" The old man simply let go of the bundle; it dropped to the ground, and the monk was enlightened.

That is our aspiration and our task to put it all down, to drop all of our clinging, condemning, identifying, our opinions and our sense of *I, me,*

*mine*. The newly enlightened monk looked at the old man again. He said, "So now what?" The old man reached down, picked up the bundle again and walked off to town.

We want to put it all down, which means also to acknowledge where it begins. To see sorrow, to see suffering, to see pain, to see that we are all in it together, to see birth and death. If we are afraid of death and afraid of suffering, and we do not want to look, then we cannot put it down. We will push it away here and will grab it again there. When we have seen the nature of life directly, we can

put it down. Once we put it down, then with understanding and compassion we can pick it up again. Then we can act effectively, even dramatically, without bitterness or self-righteousness. We can be motivated by a genuine sense of caring and of forgiveness, and a determination to live our lives well.

A number of years ago I attended a conference at which Mad Bear, an Iroquois medicine man spoke. He said, "For my presentation I'd like us to begin by going outside," and we all went out. He led us to an open field and then asked us to stand silently in a circle. We stood for a while in silence under a wide open sky, surrounded by fields of grain stretching to the horizon. Then Mad Bear began to speak, offering a prayer of gratitude. He began by thanking the earth-worms for aerating the soil so that plants can grow. He thanked the grasses that cover the earth for

keeping the dust from blowing, for cushioning our steps, and for showing our eyes the greenness and beauty of their life. He thanked the wind for bringing rain, for cleaning the air, for giving us the life-breath that connects us with all beings. He spoke in this way for nearly an hour, and as we listened we felt the wind on our faces, and the earth beneath our feet, and we saw the grass and clouds, all with a sense of connectedness, gratitude, and love.

This is the spirit of our practice of mindfulness. Love is not the near enemy of attachment, but something much deeper that infuses our awareness, enables us to open to and accept the truth of each moment, to feel our intimate connectedness with all things, and to see the wholeness of life. Whether we are sitting in meditation or sitting somewhere in protest, that is our spiritual practice in every moment.

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## Chapter Ten

### Transition to a New Consciousness

*Karan Singh, Ph.D.*

The outstanding feature of the last quarter of the twentieth century is likely to be the collapse of the materialistic paradigm that has dominated world thought for many centuries. What may be called the Cartesian-Newtonian-Marxist paradigm has collapsed, and with it, the materialistic philosophies based upon that view, whether Marxist or Capitalist, have also failed. With the impact of post-Einsteinian physics, quantum mechanics, Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, Stanislav Grof's extended cartography of the psyche, and many other conceptual revolutions, the old structures have begun to crumble. Solid matter dissolves into waves of

probability, and the new physics seems to be approaching the mystic vision of which seers and sages of all traditions have spoken.

At this crucial evolutionary crossroads, mankind is groping for a new model, a new philosophy, a new paradigm, a new consciousness to replace the old. And it is not coincidence that this is happening at a juncture when mankind is in supreme peril not from another species, not from outer space, but from itself. From deep within the human psyche there has developed a terrible power that threatens not only our own generation but all life on this planet.

Ancient myths often illuminate the human predicament, and there is a powerful Hindu myth of the Churning of the Milky Ocean (the *Samudra-Manthana*), which speaks to us today across the millenia, symbolizing the long and tortuous evolution of consciousness on earth. In this great myth, the *Devas* and the *Asuras*, the dark and the bright powers, combined and

cooperated in the churning of the ocean. This went on for aeons, until, at last, the great gifts began to emerge *Kamadhenu*, the all-giving cow, and *Ucchaishravasa*, the

divine horse; *Kalpavriksha*, the wish-fulfilling tree, and *Airavata*, the divine elephant. These and other great gifts appeared, and were happily divided between the two sides. The churning proceeded, as its ultimate objective was the *Amrita Kalasha*, the pot of ambrosia, the Elixir of Immortality for which even the gods crave.

Suddenly, without warning, the ocean started to boil with a deadly poisonthe *Garalaa* new, malign dimension of which neither the *Devas* nor the *Asuras* had any knowledge. Rapidly the poison spread through the three worldsthe water, the land, and the skies. The churners fled helter-skelter in terror, striving to escape from the deadly fumes, forgetting all the gifts that they had accumulated. And then *Shiva-Mahadeva* appeared, the great, primal divinity who was aloof from the avarice and materialism of the *Devas* and the *Asuras*. He collected the poison in

a cup and drank it, integrating it into his being. His neck turned blue as a result, hence one of his names *Neelkantha*, the blue-throated. Then the danger passed, order was restored. Chanting hymns to the glory of *Shiva*, the participants returned, the churning was resumed until finally the ambrosial pot appeared and the whole process was successfully completed.

This myth vividly illustrates the human predicament today. Prolonged churning has given man the great gifts of science and technology. There have been incredible breakthroughs in medicine, communications, agriculture, electronics, space travel, and cybernetics. We now have enough technology to ensure every human being on earth the necessary physical, intellectual, material, and spiritual resources for a full and healthy life.

And yet the poison is also upon us. Billions of dollars and rubles, pounds and francs, are spent every day on the manufacture of monstrous

weapons with unprecedented power of destruction. It is estimated that there are now well over fifty thousand nuclear warheads, each a thousand times more powerful than the bombs that devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the dawn of the nuclear age, each with more explosive force than that used by both sides in the entire World War II.

It is unnecessary to go into the catastrophic impact of a nuclear war, even a so-called limited one, which is a contradiction in terms. *The Day After*, gross understatement that it was, did help to focus our attention, as did Jonathan Schell's admirable book, *The Fate of the Earth*, and the new study by Carl Sagan and others called *The*

*Cold and the Dark: The World After Nuclear War.* It is now clear that we may commit not suicide but terricide, the destruction of our planet.

There is overwhelming evidence to show that any kind of nuclear war would not only shatter human civilization as we know it, but would poison the air and the oceans and render the planet virtually uninhabitable. When the dinosaurs bowed out after a reign of sixty-five million years they went comparatively gracefully. If and when we go, we will probably leave a charred and ravaged planet, capable of supporting only extremely primitive life. Whether this happens through political foolishness, miscalculation, accident or flight of geese or a malfunctioning computer chip matters little.

With all our tremendous knowledge, man has finally come to a single three-letter

mantraMADMutually Assured Destruction.  
Thousands of years ago, at the dawn of human civilization, the Vedic seers had also discovered a three-letter mantraAUMas the symbol of the divinity that pervades the universe. And so in five thousand years we have travelled from AUM to MAD. This is human progress?

It is a sobering thought that we are a privileged generation, not only because we may be the first to see the dawn of the third millennium after Christ but also because we may be the last generation of human beings to inhabit this planet. Can we accept this possibility as passive spectators and drift mindlessly towards disaster? Can we acquiesce in a situation where one quarter of mankind is overfed and three quarters are underfed; where millions suffer from obesity and overeating while hundreds of millions waste slowly away from malnutrition, stunted in body and mind; where millions are overmedicated and hundreds of millions lack access even to



elementary medical facilities? Can we close our ears to the cry of the deprived and the oppressed, while the world plunges on toward a rendezvous with the ultimate apocalypse?

If the answer to these questions is negative, as it must be, then we have to move toward global consciousness if we are to survive. We must move toward complementarity instead of competition, convergence instead of conflict, holism instead of hedonism. We must heal the split within the human psyche, gather the fragments of human consciousness and meld them into a glowing whole; we must effect a transition that will replace the present fractured and fragmented consciousness in the human race.

As the caterpillar undergoes the choiceless metamorphosis into a dazzling and iridescent butterfly, we must understand that our transition, too, is choiceless. Transitions are never painless, but we must accept the physical and psychological distress involved in abandoning a comfortable and familiar environment and leaping into a new and hitherto unknown dimension. Though this most crucial of all transitions for mankind will be a painful and protracted affair, the important question is whether it is possible. Can there be a substantial transformation of consciousness on this planet in time to prevent its destruction? Or is this particular adventure in planetary consciousness doomed to failure; is man a creature programmed for self-destruction? No one knows the answer, but the Bhagavad Gita teaches that we must act in the manner we feel to be right, and not be obsessed with the consequences; act

not from our inflated or deflated egos but from the deepest recesses of our being. Indeed, at this juncture in planetary history, creative action is a spiritual imperative.

We are then led to inquire as to what exactly can be done to hasten the transition. I suggest a five-point program that could help in the process, provided it is widely publicized and acted upon. This is a program of which many elements are already in operation to some degree, but which needs to be coordinated and accelerated so that we can achieve a creative symbiosis.

The first requirement is to work out the philosophical underpinning of the new global consciousness. For this we must draw on many of mankind's traditions, both in the religious and secular mode, and also upon the latest insights of science. In the Vedas we have ideals that are startling in their contemporary relevance. Such concepts as the spiritual unity of all that exists, the divinity inherent in each human being,

mankind as a single family, the harmony of religions, the welfare of all sections of society, for example, provide an ideological framework for the new consciousness; and the writings of great evolutionary thinkers of our century like Sri Aurobindo, Teilhard de Chardin, and Pandit Gopi Krishna can greatly help to refine and illuminate the new philosophy.

Once this is done, the tremendous resources of the modern mass media must be pressed into service so that these concepts become part of the mental structure of mankind. This is a task in which not only national governments and nonofficial agencies need to be in-

involved, but even more importantly, international and multilateral organizations. This year happens to mark the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. What better opportunity can there be for the United Nations to take the initiative in working towards creating a global consciousness? Other U.N. agencies, especially UNESCO and the U.N. University in Tokyo, should also be actively involved in this process.

Simultaneously, the third task is to set up a worldwide network linking the hundreds of groups and millions of people who acutely feel this great anxiety about our future. This must cut across all barriers of race or religion, nationality or ideology, sex or sexual preference, economic or social status. It must unite East and West, North and South, rich and poor, white and black, believer and atheist, into a massive, coordinated thrust to save mankind from annihilation.

Organizations like the International Transpersonal Association (ITA) can play a pivotal role in helping this worldwide transition to a new mode of thinking relevant to the realities of this nuclear age.

The fourth task is the imperative necessity of halting the suicidal and now essentially meaningless nuclear arms race. With enough fissionable material already available to destroy every human being on this planet a dozen times over, the whole syndrome has become absurd, especially when we realize that an equivalent of ten days of this world's expenditure on armaments could permanently abolish hunger from the globe. While there are a number of nations with nuclear capability, it is really the rulers of the two superpowers (the contemporary *Devas* and *Asuras*) who will have to cooperate in any revival of sanity. We must try to create a tremendous pressure of public opinion and mobilize leaders of religious and philosophical

thought so that the conscience of mankind can be heard.

Finally, any movement for the new global consciousness must revert and relate to an individual search for inner peace. In our own lives we must move toward a realization of the truth at the core of our being, and toward the higher consciousness that is the birthright of each of us. In the ultimate analysis, it is in the crucible of our individual selves that the poison around us can be contained and transformed into a new, global consciousness. In this lies the hope for individual salvation as well as the survival of this earth.

The ancient spiritual traditions of both East and West have always known that our planet is not just a ball of earth and stone, lava

and water. A most dramatic illustration was provided by the unique first photograph of earth taken from outer space that showed our planet as a tiny speck of life and light against the unending vastness of outer space, pulsating with energy and with a strange, fragile beauty.

In the *Atharva Veda*, one of the world's most ancient scriptures, there is the magnificent *Bhumi Suktam*, Hymn to the Earth (X1 1.1) Composed over five thousand years ago by the great seer Atharvan, it speaks to us today with a new resonance, a fresh urgency. It has sixty-three verses, from which I have abstracted the twelve that follow (in translation by Abinash Chandra Bose).

Truth, eternal order that is great and stern,  
Consecration, Austerity, Prayer and Ritual  
these uphold the Earth.  
May she, Queen of what has been and will be,  
make a wide world for us.



Earth which has many heights, and slopes  
and the unconfined plains that bind men together,  
Earth that bears plants of various healing powers,  
may she spread wide for us and thrive.

Earth, in which lie the sea, the river and other waters,  
in which food and cornfields have come to be,  
in which lives all that breathes and that moves,  
may she confer on us the finest of her yield.

Earth, which at first was in the water of the ocean,  
and which sages sought with wondrous powers,  
Earth whose heart was in eternal heaven,  
wrapped in Truth, immortal,  
may she give us luster and strength  
in a most exalted state.

Earth, in which the waters, common to all,  
moving on all sides, flow unfailingly, day and night,  
may she pour on us milk in many streams,  
and endow us with lustre.

Pleasant by thy hills, O Earth,  
thy snow-clad mountains and thy woods!  
O Earthbrown, black, red and multicolored  
the firm Earth protected by Indra,  
on this Earth may I stand unvanquished, unhurt, unslain.

I call to Earth, the purifier,  
the patient Earth, growing strong through spiritual night.  
May we recline on thee, O Earth, who bearest power and  
plenty,  
and enjoy our share of food and molten butter.

May those that are thy eastern regions, O Earth,  
and the northern and the southern and the western,  
be pleasant for me to tread upon.  
May I not stumble while I live in the world.

Whatever I dig from thee, Earth,  
may that have quick growth again.  
O purifier, may we not injure thy vitals or thy heart.

May Earth with people who speak various tongues,  
and those who have various religious rites  
according to their places of abode,  
pour for me treasure in a thousand streams  
like a constant cow that never fails.

May those born of thee, O Earth,  
be, for our welfare, free from sickness and waste.  
Wakeful through a long life, we shall become  
bearers of tribute to thee.

Earth, my mother, set me securely with bliss

in full accord with heaven.  
O wise one,  
uphold me in grace and splendor.

This Earth has nurtured consciousness from the slime of the primeval ocean, billions of years ago, and has sustained the human race for countless centuries. Will we repay our debt by converting her into a burnt-out cinder circling the sun into eternity? Or will we so marshall our inner and outer resources so that even at this late hour we may succeed in making the crucial transition to the new consciousness? Time will tell. But if we do not make the transition, no one will be here to record our ending.

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## Chapter Eleven

### The Darkness of God: Theology After Hiroshima

*James Garrison, PH.D.*

The path to wisdom that Hiroshima and the advent of nuclear weapons challenge us to take is to the good of life itself. We are being summoned to direct our energies upon the creative source of life and values rather than upon specific values as they are expressed through the narrow provincialism of a particular group. This is and has been a primary ethical component of the Judaeo-Christian tradition from its inception. Indeed, it was a fundamental aspect of the mission of Jesus himself to break down the separateness and exclusiveness of the individuals and groups he encountered so that

they could be receptive to the kingdom of God and openly responsive to one another. He taught them to love their neighbor as themselves, particularly the neighbor oppressed by the guilt induced by orthodox legalisms and social ostracism. As Henry Weiman puts it, Jesus "split the atom of human egoism." <sup>1</sup> His presence was like a catalyst inducing creative transformations in the persons who believed in him.

Weiman amplifies this observation concerning Jesus with a note that has striking similarity to the concept we shall be dealing with in relation to Hiroshima.

The creative transformation power was not in the man Jesus, although it could not have occurred apart from him. Rather he was in it. It required many other things besides his own solitary self. It required the Hebrew heritage, the disciples with their particular capacity for this kind of responsiveness, and doubtless much else of which we have little knowledge.

The creative power lay in the interaction taking place between these individuals. It transformed their minds, their personalities, their appreciable world, and their community with one another and with all men. 2

What occurred in the group surrounding Jesus was the elevation of a creative event, happening within the bounds of their history, to a place of dominance and centrality in their lives. They understood and believed the creative event to be Emmanuel, and they were willing to open up the walls of their separateness to the transforming power of Christ and the all-encompassing community of fellow-believers. Their leap of faith was in their willingness to incorporate a newly enacted historical event within their confessional heritage and in allowing their old modes of understanding to be opened up to the freedom of spirit at work in the new event. They experienced thereby a new dimension of human possibility and could give witness to the fact that

the Christ event had produced a new order of human awareness and potentiality.

We are being confronted in our day with the same necessity to transform our old modes of understanding if the human race is to survive. We must first of all be willing to recognize that what is occurring is Emmanuel God with us. To make this leap in consciousness, however, will be as difficult for us today as it was for the Pharisees and Sadducees to make concerning Christ two thousand years ago, steeped and secure as they were in their orthodox legalisms. Yet, even as the early believers were able to see the handiwork and overall control of God in the midst of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, so too must we be willing to perceive God at work in the atom bomb.

Hiroshima confronts us as never before with the imperative to take the wrath of God seriously. We must be willing at long last to give up our monopolar prejudice concerning God being

merely an expression of the Summum Bonum and capable of only love and mercy and "goodness." We must recognize that God is the God of all possibilities and that God utilizes all the instruments of power. Ultimately, what we are witnessing in our day is a great attempt on the part of the Godhead to reveal deeper dimensions of the divine pleroma, and to compel us to explore even more deeply the mystery of Christ crucified.



The second point we must recognize in order fully to appreciate the Hiroshima event is that, with the power of mass destruction in our hands, we have taken upon ourselves that last category attributed to God in the traditional view: the belief that God would end the world in apocalyptic judgment and then recreate heaven and earth. But what the apocalyptists believed was fixed by the counsel of God and brought to pass by divine will and action alone is now something within the realm of human decision. This means that we must internalize theologically both the terror and the salvation of the traditional Judaeo-Christian concept of apocalypse as something that will not be done to us by divine fiat alone, but as something that might well be done by us through our own decision, God working divine wrath through human arrogance. Hiroshima has humanized the eschaton.

To assert that Hiroshima represents an era of new dimensions of human power, while at the same time asserting that it points us to the darkness of God at work in Christ crucified, may sound contradictory. But it is not; it is complementary. Both are happening simultaneously and must be kept in a dialectical tension if we are to give any sense at all to the claim I shall be setting forth: that the relational encounter between God and humanity coheres relationally in a single event that draws each according to its degree of freedom and affects each according to its respective vulnerability. Hiroshima is the nexus point in our day when God and humanity meet to reveal deeper dimensions within the reality of both. As such, therefore, Hiroshima is numinous, holding forth to the eyes of faith the ambiguity involved in all creative events.

In order to speak of God in a way in which modern humanity can experience the power of this "unspeakable mystery," it is fundamental that

we dispense with classical theism while remaining grounded in the biblical witness. This will be difficult, because for centuries the notions of classical theism were considered to be the biblical witness. However, the God of the Bible is much more alive and versatile than the straitjacket of theism allows for. Dispensing with theism will allow us to return to the Bible and see more profound dimensions of the God that Jews and Christians worship. What I wish to draw attention to before proceeding, therefore, are certain themes enunciated by the Judaeo-Christian confessional witness which

will remain constant, for they form part of the distinctive claim of our religious heritage. They can be reworked but not dispensed with.

What emerges as basic to the concept of God that Hebrews developed, and which the Christians later amplified, is that God is at once the Cosmic Creator of heaven and earth and also inseparably linked with human history. For the Hebrews, God was an eminently social God who had made a covenant with humanity. The importance of this is that the historical element gives the cosmic dimension placement in space and time.

A second element in the Judaeo-Christian belief concerning God is in terms of divine creativity. "In the beginning God created . . ." are the opening words of the scriptures, an understanding inherent even in the name "Yahweh." God created the heavens and the earth; God created humankind; and God has been

creatively active in human history ever since redeeming the people of Israel from Egypt, making the covenant with them at Sinai, leading them through the vicissitudes of their history to the promised land, exiling them for their disobedience, forgiving them and bringing them again to Israel, finally becoming incarnate in their midst as Christ Jesus.

The creative activity of God in history is not limited to working salvifically only amongst the chosen people. God works the divine will in all nations, both to lift up and to bring down. This point is brought out most forcefully by Isaiah when he prophesies concerning Yahweh's punishment of Israel. It is clear to the prophet that Assyria is a tool in the hands of God.

Ah, Assyria, the rod of my anger,  
the staff of my fury!

Against a godless nation I send him,  
and against the people of my wrath I command him,  
to take spoil and seize plunder,  
and to tread them down like mire of the streets (Isa. 10.56).

Isaiah is quick to point out that although Assyria is being used by God, Assyria is unaware of it. The Assyrians think they are defeating Israel by their own power, saying

By the strength of my hand I have done it,  
and by my wisdom, for I have understanding (13a).

Therefore, prophesies Isaiah, when the Lord has finished using Assyria to punish Israel, the Assyrians will in turn be punished for their "arrogant boasting" and "haughty pride" (12):

Shall the axe vaunt itself over him who hews it,  
or the saw magnify itself against him who wields it?  
As if a rod should wield him who lifts it,  
or as if a staff should lift him who is not wood (15)!

God is sovereign over history, working the divine will creatively in our midst. It is a creative activity with both light and shadow dimensions before which the believers can only kneel in awe, filled with both reverence and trembling.

These themes will be amplified as we proceed, for they must be understood if we are to perceive the handiwork of God in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. What is important for our purposes here is to make clear that the assertion that God acts in history is the cornerstone of any Judeo-

Christian ontology of God.

The modern hermeneutical challenge is to be concurrently so deeply rooted both "in God" and in the modern world as to create a relevant context of confessional witness. We must discern the hand of God in historical events in a way that touches modern humanity while remaining consistent with the ancient Judeo-Christian credo that history is "in God" and that God acts decisively and centrally in certain historical events which shape the whole.

There are two aspects which must be kept in a creative synthesis in order to grasp the presence of divinity in history: the aspect of historical fact and the aspect of confessional response. That Jesus died on the cross is the historical fact. That "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures" is the confessional response. Both are necessary components of the actual occurrence. Only when historical facts and confessional discernment interpenetrate do we have history "in



God": Heilsgeschichte.

The intersection of the historical event with the confessional response yields a dialectic that gives a dynamic quality to the biblical concept of divine action. The confession is not made static within the recitation of cosmogonic myth nor is it solidified into a juridical system of doctrine; instead, divine action is an evolving development

made discernible within the continual interpenetration of new events with confessional heritage.

This can be seen in the prophecies of Deutero-Isaiah 40:5-55. After several centuries of Israelite nationhood, Assyria destroyed the ten northern tribes of Israel. Babylon then conquered the two remaining tribes, ruled by the house of David, and took them captive to Babylon. For seventy years they remained in exile. Then Persia moved against Babylon and Deutero-Isaiah prophesied that the Jews would be allowed to return to Jerusalem. This hope was crystalized by the campaign of King Cyrus of Persia, reflected in Isaiah 41:23 and 45:13, in which Cyrus defeats King Croesus of Lydia in 546 B.C. and prepares to take Babylon in 539 B.C. This web of circumstances set in motion by Cyrus's campaign was understood in Isaiah 42:13 as typologically a

new exodus.

The Lord goes forth like a mighty man,  
like a man of war he stirs up his fury;  
he cries aloud, he shouts aloud,  
he shows himself mighty against his foes.

Yahweh is seen here as reenacting the exodus from Egypt, only this time it is from Babylon after the years of exile and the initiator is Cyrus rather than Moses. Again in captivity, the chosen people of God are being miraculously delivered by their sovereign and gracious Lord. The "God of our Fathers" is again seen to be leading Israel out of bondage.

Indeed, the prophecy recites the all-inclusive power and understanding of Yahweh, the epistemological function of which is clear; to designate the new exodus event as profoundly universalized but as still entirely within the purposes of the one true God, who proclaims

I am the Lord, and there is no other,  
besides me there is no God;

I gird you, though you do not know me,  
that men may know, from the rising of the sun  
and from the west, and there is none besides me;  
I am the Lord, and there is no other (Isa. 45.56).

This model implies a "hermeneutic of engagement." It is thus described because through it the believing community engages simultaneously with the two facets of divine activity in human affairs: heritage and event. In this way the believing community brings the confessional heritage, through which the community perceives the purposeful movement of God through the historical process, into a living encounter with contemporary reality. In this engagement the heritage is amplified, and through it the believing community interprets the event as a further illumination of a pattern already witnessed and confessed to as in some sense numinous. In the hermeneutic of engagement, therefore, the meaning and context of contemporary events will be clarified and given their religious depth by interpreting them in the light of the paradigmatic events of the community's past.

Even as the return from exile was a new exodus, so the advent of nuclear weapons is a new apocalypse. This dialectic between Hiroshima and the apocalyptic challenges us to explore the coming together of humanity and God in our new found powers of global destruction and our capacity for planetary renewal. It is important to stress the co-creative character of the apocalyptic possibilities in our day. Hiroshima humanizing the apocalypse means that if the wrath of God must come, it is human hands which will push the button; and if the righteousness of God will replace the old order with a new one, it is human work which will create it. In history, God never works alone, but always in conjunction with human beings. Therefore, it is imperative to find the locus of the divine/human interface within the human realm, for whatever God is in divine transcendence, God is only concrete to humans when divinity is made manifest in history.

What must be discerned is that locus in which

three things occur: first, where the human realities of darkness and light are felt most strongly; second, where these human feelings and drives engage with and are affected by God; and third, where some type of synthesis can occur not only between the forces peculiarly human but also between the human and the divine.

The locus in which all these three dynamics occur is the human psyche, for it is here that the active inner and spiritual life of human beings takes place; where religious experience takes place, meaning our inner encounters with God; and where we can synthesize the

contradictions within us to achieve some type of reconciliation. As I said, Hiroshima has made imperative this journey inward; therefore, theology, if it is to internalize adequately the historical event Hiroshima represents, must take seriously the psychic dimensions of human experience. Not only does our psyche influence what we perceive, receive, mediate, and express in terms of our spiritual life, but it is only as we find reconciliation within the psyche that we can deal adequately with the polarities inherent in the external world. A psychotheology has, since Hiroshima, become inescapable in understanding the dilemma we are confronted with. We are all survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki because we have all had "engraved" in our psyches the death immersion the atomic bombing of Japan represents. As Robert Lifton points out, this death immersion has caused a "psychic mutation" in us all.



In exploring our psychic reality I have chosen to follow primarily the discoveries of C.G. Jung because he appreciated the psyche as the locus in which the human and the divine meet, mutually affect one another, and co-create. Besides offering a practical and open model of the psyche which must be taken seriously, Jung also delved with profound clarity and perception in the area that concerns us the advent of nuclear weapons. Particularly in his *Answer to Job*, he struggled with the question of why it is that after several thousand years of religious culture in the West, Western civilization has brought all planetary life to the brink of extinction through thermonuclear war. For Jung, this meant dealing most fundamentally with the problem of evil and with the shadow aspect of reality, not only in humanity but in divinity areas not amenable to the neat categorizations of rational logic. This led him to an affirmation of the antinomial character of God, a reality in which a "both . . . and . . ."

complementarity of opposites is much more constructive than the "either/or" dichotomy of logical reasoning.

In grappling with this complex problem, Jung is also helpful in deepening our understanding of the hermeneutic of engagement discussed earlier. His model of the psyche is based on the interaction of consciousness with unconsciousness and the interaction of the logic of time, space and causality with symbols and mythic images. Consciousness uses the categories of time, space and causality; the unconscious uses symbols and mythic images. The interrelationship between these two aspects of the psyche form a *complexio oppositorum*,

a tension of opposites, which can be integrated only by the self-the unifying force in the psyche if we are to reach the goal of wholeness. To reduce symbol to rational logic or mythic images to the literalism of the categories of time, space and causality on the one hand or to swallow up the reality of the world of time, space and causality into symbol and myth on the other is to miss the real profundity and dynamic power of the psyche. The same holds true for scripture: to reduce divine action in history to either literalism or demythologized rationalism on the one hand, or to deny the physical historical truth of Jesus of Nazareth by swallowing it up in symbol or myth on the other, is to emasculate the mystery of the biblical witness. The hermeneutic of engagement holds both historical fact and confessional response in creative tension. Jung's model of the psyche does the same. Consciousness is in tension with the unconscious; and the categories

of time, space, and causality are in tension with the expressions of symbol and myth. The resulting *complexio oppositorum*, while not amenable to rationalist reduction, leads us closer to an appreciation of the mystery of scripture and the antinomial reality of both the human psyche and our experience of God.

The individuation process is in effect a co-creation of consciousness with the unconscious. In asserting God to be an autonomous complex and a symbol whose affects are psychologically measurable, God is bound to become relative; for if God is placed in an intimate relation with the soul, God in effect becomes vulnerable to the soul. In so far as God is to have any communication with us and be psychologically effective, God must be mediated through an image within the psyche; that is, through a symbol.

Symbols, however, arise in the human psyche, evolve to a certain point where their content

becomes explicable in some other way, and then fade. Such is the case with the recent demise of the God-image presented by theism: it is an image whose time is past; therefore, "God is dead" says the theologians. However, a new image is in the process of arising. Note that I am not saying arising through our actions, but taking shape of its own accord. I stress the overwhelming role of God and the unconscious in any symbol formation. We can only consciously participate in what is already occurring at its own initiative. This evolving of God-images, while certainly not